MY AUSTRIAN LOVE

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MY AUSTRIAN LOVE

By the same Author:

MONTOREL

The Story of a Coincidence.

The Times: "A highly romantic tale, well knit and well told."

The Daily Graphic: "A unique achievement."

The Athenæum: "An excellent story."

The Globe: "A literary *tour de force*."

Birmingham Mercury: "A masterly work."

Birmingham Gazette: "Wonderful."

Glasgow Herald: "Freshly written, deliciously holding our attention throughout."

etc., etc., etc.

No Lover of Fiction can Afford to miss Reading

"MONTOREL."

MY AUSTRIAN LOVE

The History of the Adventures
of an English Composer in Vienna

Written in the Trenches
by Himself

BY

MAXIME PROVOST

(Author of "Montorel.")

LONDON :

THE IRIS PUBLISHING CO.

30-31 FURNIVAL STREET, E.C. 4.

Many of the personages are genuine. Maurus Giulay, for instance, whose initials I have kept, and Bischoff. As for Hammer, I think that musicians will easily recognize Anton Bruckner, the famous antagonist of Brahms.

What more have I to say?

Not much.—Only to ask my readers to be as indulgent towards "MY AUSTRIAN LOVE" *as they were towards* "MONTOREL."

M. P.

(Does not mean Member of Parliament.)

INTRODUCTION.

EXACTLY in the middle of the railway bridge by which the Salzach is spanned Bavarian territory ceases and Austria begins. I knew that; but I was much less impressed by this probably interesting fact (for, why on earth would one have taken so much care to inform me, if it were not interesting?) than by the singular beauty of the spot. I had just a glimpse of the two isolated hills between which the river flows, of the lovely valley thus formed, and of the lofty fortress that rises above the towers and spires of the city. In the next minute the train stopped and cries of "Salzburg, all change!" or its German equivalent, resounded.

At once my neighbour, an irascible Frenchman, who from Munich had shared the carriage with me, flew up in a rage, gesticulating, full of noise.

"It is not true," he cried, "I don't have to change!"

I muttered something like "Custom Regulations," but he went on vociferating:

"It is not true! I was told in Paris that the handbags and the other small things would be examined in the carriage, and the heavy luggage in Vienna. I refuse to get out."

He was right. I had been told the same thing in Munich, but, as an Englishman, I was wont to hold my peace. So I alighted.

In the same minute an official approached our carriage and invited the Frenchman to do as he was bid. The official was not very polite, it must be said in justice to the Parisian, but the latter clamoured at once, shaking his fists: "It was disgusting, and he was going to do as it pleased him!" Whereupon the man with the red cap introduced himself in a gruff voice as an Imperial and Royal Official and menaced his antagonist with immediate arrest. I tried to dissuade both from quarrelling, but the Frenchman was deaf to all reason.

When at last a police officer came, the nervous little man left the carriage with an explosion of wrath and stormed to the door leading into the station building. What

further happened to him, I do not know, nor will the reader ever learn it. For this Frenchman had evidently been created only to set free a certain corner seat in my railway carriage.

For various reasons, a few of which will appear in this story, I will probably never return to Austria. But, gentle reader, *you* may visit this beautiful country. Well, if you chance to travel in a first-class corridor carriage numbered P.3.33, and in the section marked C, greet the corner seats next to the window from me. Not because I sat in one of these corner seats when my story opened, nor because the other was occupied by the irascible little Frenchman, who has already stepped out of my story, but for the sake of the traveller who succeeded him and who was no less a person than the heroine of this book.

And now I will try and tell you all about it, or better, about her, supposing that the noise of the shells does not disturb me too much. For you must know that I am writing in the trenches. After all, I am used to the continuous concert, and I am not fifty yards distant from a man who is working on a chemistry treatise.

I.

I HAD opened my boxes and bags, and had closed them again after a customs officer's pretence at looking at the things which were inside. I wanted now to go back to my carriage, but was told that I had to pass through an adjoining room. Heaven does not know why; much less does anybody else. In that room, out of which a glass door led to the platform, I had to wait. Not many minutes, I was assured; but their quality made up for the quantity. They were hateful minutes. There I was, pasted (if I may say so) to that glass door and looking at that unreachable goal, my carriage, which was standing just in front of me.

Outside a few travellers, favoured for some unknown reason, either by the officials or by fate, were walking leisurely up and down, and I noticed amongst them a very smart officer with a tall lady. He was

revolving around her with courtesies that reminded me singularly of a cock's compliments to a hen. He had a most wonderful uniform which fitted him to perfection. He had also a moustache, oh, what a moustache! It gave me an idea of how his horse must be curried. And he wore a single eye-glass, which obliged him to make the most charming grimaces. He was holding his sword by the hilt, except at such moments when he let it drag along the ground, in order to produce a graceful clinking which I could hear through my accursed glass door.

At last we were relieved and set free. I hurried to my carriage to find that the porter whom I had entrusted with my bags and valises had set them down so as to mark all the seats. I would be alone.

"Are all the seats in this section occupied?" asked a rather rattling voice behind me.

I turned round and saw my pretty officer with his lady.

"No," I answered, "I think I am alone," whereupon the lady at once entered the carriage. The officer remained outside

and closed the door while she, lowering the window, leaned outside to continue her conversation. I guessed that my journey would be *en tête à tête*, and, of course, wondered whether she was young and pretty. Her companion was himself such an accomplished beauty, that I had in fact omitted to look at her. Anyhow, what I saw at present, although it was the wrong side only, the reverse of the medal, to be polite, was not at all to be despised. But when the toss was made, would the head be worthy of the tail?

At last a faint whistle was heard.

"Remember to write!" exclaimed the officer outside, while the train stirred, moved groaning forward, and slowly began rolling out of the station. For a while the lady remained leaning out of the window and waving her handkerchief. Then, at length, she sat back in her seat, the seat which the little Frenchman had occupied, and from which his temper (or was it my luck?) had removed him.

She was uncommonly pretty, although she at once assumed an elaborate air of indifference. She even pouted a little, but it only helped to show her fleshy, red lips to

a better advantage. And her features were much too soft as to be spoiled by that alleged air of indifference. They were not very regular, these features, but they formed a handsome whole. And now, as a little smile crept over them, a dimple, a tiny, sweet dimple, appeared near the left corner of her mouth.

Why had she smiled? To show that dimple and her lovely teeth? Or had she been thinking of her companion? That smile—was it coquetry, or some pleasing remembrance? Or had mockery made her smile?

What was she to that officer? A sister? A wife? A mistress?

How old was she? I wished she would take off that bonnet. Bonnets deceive. This is the reason why they play such an important part in woman's life.

I did not know much about millinery, but this was rather a showy bonnet. So was the rest of the toilet. She looked like an officer's wife. Besides, had she been his sister, he would scarcely have played the cock and hen game. But then, if she was his wife, he probably would not have played

it either! His had been a suitor's behaviour.

I had reached this point of my meditations when she took off her gloves, and I saw that she had no rings on her fingers. And then, as if to satisfy my wishes, she removed the bonnet. She was fair, with a copper sheen on her hair, and probably not more than twenty.

My penetration, for I thought myself pretty shrewd and sharp-sighted, constructed now rapidly the following theory: *She* was a young gentlewoman, her tall figure being a proof of her high breed. She was well off, the showy dress and her travelling first-class confirmed it. She was nicely brought up, as became a young and noble lady, for she wore no jewellery. (In my idea wearing jewellery is inconsistent with a young lady's good education.) As for the officer, he was neither a brother, nor a husband, nor a lover, but some friend or relation, who had just accompanied her to the railway station in order to help her with her luggage, and so on.

Now, all this proves only, that I was then an inexperienced youth of 21, easy of belief, and superficial. If I tell you that I

was a musician (I do not say : I *am*; I say : I *was*) you will understand my character altogether.

* * * *

I had to interrupt my history. Our Father which is in the War Office had sent us our daily jam. I wonder whether my pretty Austrian officer, whom I first saw eight years ago at the Salzburg railway station, is still alive, and whether he has jam, too? And whether he thinks of me as I do of him, and whether he remembers that Sunday afternoon when he put her, my Austrian love, in my railway carriage?

She was sitting there, looking out of the window. It was now a quarter of an hour since we had left Salzburg, and the train had got on its even, rapid pace that it would keep up for the afternoon.

I did not dare to speak to my fair Comtesse. This was the rank which my imagination had given her. If, when travelling, you do not start a conversation at once, you generally never will. So I fretted. I had nothing to read, not even a paper. I did not want to sleep, besides, I

never could sleep on a train. As for her, she hardly moved.

Thus another quarter of an hour had passed, when the conductor, opening the door of the corridor, asked for our tickets. I could not help feeling surprised when I saw the man, for he looked somewhat like a twin brother of the little Frenchman. He was of the same size, had the same black hair, the same black moustache and pointed tuft of beard on his chin. It was so striking that my English brain, brought up chiefly on detective stories, smelt at once a mystery. I could not refrain from stepping out with him on to the corridor where, in order to make certain whether the little Frenchman and the conductor were but one person, I asked him what the next stop was. He answered and began chatting. It was quite another voice and, while my Frenchman spoke German only with great difficulty, this conductor gave me an example of the volubility with which the Viennese people speak their broad, good-humoured dialect. The mystery was only chance.

"A nice girl," said the man smiling and blinking with his eyes half closed in the

direction of the Comtesse.

"Where is she travelling to?" I asked.

"Vienna," he answered. And then, raising his eyes with a match-making expression under his black eyebrows, "I travel the whole way with you," said he. "If you will, I'll try and leave you alone with her."

I understood. My backsheesh was soon handed over, whereupon—I suppose—that high-priest of the railway church mentally pronounced the decisive words which were to unite us for the duration of our journey.

I must say, however, that this matrimonial benediction took no immediate effect. For when I returned to my seat, I still had no courage to talk to my fair *vis-à-vis*.

She had not moved and was looking with desperate equanimity at the landscape that was galloping before her eyes.

I felt silly. I often do.

Like a child, I busied myself with the window strap. It was at that moment that I noticed the small white plate affixed to the door:

P. 3.33. C.

P. 3.33 was the number of the car, and C the number of the section. But P. C. were

also the initials of my name. And, as I have not yet introduced myself to the reader, I take this opportunity of telling him (or her) that my name is Patrick Cooper, of London, son of Daniel Cooper and Co., Ltd., insurance brokers, (*and Co.* being quite a negligible quantity, while *Ltd.* is not).

I suppose that music and superstition must be of a very near relationship. Even now, although I am no longer a musician, but a Lance-Corporal (all honour to me!) my superstition survives. For instance: I am a passionate hunter of rats. Well, whenever I miss one, you may be sure that the next lot of bacon we get is bad.

Therefore it will be admitted that the discovery of my initials on the plate of the carriage door could not but fill me with a certain awe. Yet, not with awe alone! Also with curiosity. What was the meaning of 3.33?

I spent a few minutes over this highly interesting riddle, until another thought came, namely: If I were not soon to engage in conversation with the Comtesse, I should have spent my backsheesh in vain.

I looked at my watch. It was half-past three, which meant that I had already lost

fifty minutes. All right! The figures 3.33 were to have a meaning. If in three minutes, at 3.33, nothing happened, *I would talk*. The weather might afford quite a suitable topic, if not new nor in any way sensational, so at least not at all offensive. I accordingly prepared myself. Two minutes.—One minute and a half.—One minute. —A half minute...

The Westinghouse brake underneath the car made itself heard with a grating, harsh shriek, there was a shock that ran through the train, and at 3.33 exactly the Comtesse was pitched from her seat into my arms, while one of my bags came to the floor and the train to a sudden halt. In the next second, however, a terrific dash made it move backwards, and we were both thrown from my seat into her's.

"What is it?" asked the fair one, after we had struggled out of our mutual embrace.

Outside many people began to cry all at once and hurried footsteps were heard.

"There is something wrong," answered I.

There was, indeed. On that particular spot the line, for some technical reason, was only single tracked, and railway smashes were therefore not altogether avoidable.

The Comtesse wanted to alight at once, but I held her back.

"What for?" I asked. "Are you not all right here? The worst is over. If there is anything to be seen, it must be most unpleasant."

She settled down again in her seat. Her fright had apparently been great, to judge from her paleness and from the way she looked, wide eyed, at me. Out of the bag which had tumbled down from the net, I took a flask of brandy and a little goblet.

"Drink this," I said, offering her a few drops.

She accepted, and then:

"How phlegmatic you English are!" said she. "Look at these people..."

The excitement outside was incredible. Strange voices were heard. Passengers and railway servants were running up and down in a most foolish and useless fashion. Two gentlemen were shouting at each other; they were in a hot discussion about what was to be done. One woman was kneeling and praying hysterically at the foot of a telegraph post which she probably was mistaking for a way-side cross. And everybody was talking, crying. It was all the more ridiculous, as

there had, in fact, happened nothing of importance. Both engines and the luggage vans were badly damaged, but nobody was injured. If I want to imagine, what it means nowadays when I read: "Austrians defeated"—I have only to remember this scene of panic and disorder, and I know at once.

Nothing, so to say, had happened; but the men, having all lost their presence of mind, behaved like sheep, looking to each other, appealing for help, while most of the women were weeping, pallid, with cadaverous lips.

In England everybody would have been quiet, perhaps a little annoyed, perhaps amused, but in any case not a bit frightened. That was why the Comtesse had called me phlegmatic. I hoped that it was my calmness which had made her guess my English nationality: I was too proud of my German to suspect that my pronounciation had betrayed me.

Anyhow, the ice was broken, and we were now chatting comfortably. Slowly the excitement of the other passengers subsided and a period of silence followed. People went back into their carriages. Even the

little conductor had disappeared; he was walking to the next signal-box, where he would telephone for help. The wait seemed interminable.

The Comtesse began to fidget.

"You still look a little pale," said I. "Do you feel well?"

She nodded meekly.

"But not entirely well? You feel tired? You have got a headache?"

"No, no!" she protested smilingly.

"I see. You want a little more brandy."

"No, no," she repeated.

But I was not satisfied. She seemed distressed.

"You are anxious about your luggage. Do you want me to go and see?"

"I have no luggage."

"You have no luggage?"

"No."

I was surprised. For she had brought none into the car either. Still, that was no business of mine.

"Can't I do anything for you?"

"You may tell me the time."

"It is a quarter past four."

"And since when are we here?"

I named the foreshadowed moment: "3.33."

"Three-quarters of an hour!" she cried. "But we will arrive in Vienna at an impossible hour."

She looked alarmed.

At last, after what appeared an endless delay, but what was in reality only another half-hour, an engine arrived, and both trains tied together were drawn into the next station. There followed a lot of manœuvring; the train which had run into our's had first to be removed, and then the two engines, of which only the wheels were still in a possible state. The luggage van was replaced and the luggage repacked. And, finally, at nearly six o'clock, we resumed our journey at a breakneck speed.

The young lady seemed rather oppressed, probably by visions of some more terrific accidents. Each time, when there was a switch, the jolting caused by transferring the carriage from one line of rails to another seemed to send a thrill of fear through her frame. Nevertheless, she proved a very willing and agreeable talker. Perhaps was she too nervous to keep silent, for I had to inform her of the time every quarter of an

hour. But she did not tell me why; whether somebody was awaiting her, or whether there was some particular reason for her to dread her late arrival. Nor did I learn anything about her. She remained clad in mystery. After several hours' conversation I did not know any more of her than when I had seen her first. On the other hand, she knew all about me and, as a matter of fact, I suppose that it was I who did most of the talking. I tried thus, by showing my confidence, to win hers. But in vain.

At last we reached Vienna. We were full three hours late. As she had told me about the difficulty of getting a cab, I asked her whether I might not go and fetch her one.

"Yes! She would be pleased!"

So, having designated a certain pillar in the great hall, where she was to wait for me with my bags, I went in search of a Jehu. (I do not know whether in Vienna *Jehu* would be an acceptable nickname, but never mind.) It was not a very easy task, and I had plenty of time to prepare myself for the three questions which I absolutely must ask her before we parted: Whether, when, and where I should see her again. I knew that in Vienna it was the fashion to kiss the hand

of a lady at such a moment. And I saw myself already bending over her hand and kissing it, asking her the fateful questions.

But, when after ten minutes I came back, the fair Comtesse had gone. My bags were standing lonely near the pillar and greeted me with a mocking grin.

II.

SERGEANT YOUNG gives a few orders and then turns to me.

"I have read that first chapter of your book," he says. "For a man without any experience as a writer it is not so bad. But, of course..."

Sergeant Young, my particular chum, is the most extraordinary man of the regiment. Take a pint each of Figaro and d'Artagnan, half a pint of demigod, a spoonful each of Scotchman, Frenchman, and South African, mix well and put into khaki : You will have Sergeant Young ready for use. Since the beginning of the war he has been dreaming of a commission and, my word, nobody ever deserved one if he does not. We have been together at the Dardanelles, and what remains of our Division—although it is not much—was saved by him.

He is a funny man. You do not know whether he is rich or poor, for one day he has the manner of a *grand seigneur* and the next

day he is satisfied with a beggar's fare. You cannot guess what he is in civil life. At one moment you may take him for a broker from the Stock Exchange, at the next for an art critic, or a farmer, an innkeeper, an accountant, a horsebreaker, a historian, or a miner. We only know that he is a splendid soldier and an excellent fellow.

It is in his quality of an art critic that I have given him to read the first chapter of my book.

"You see," says he, "if I were to write a book, I would begin with the beginning."

"I do begin with the beginning," I retort, "only there are some preliminary facts which may as well be told in the course of the narrative. I like to enter *in medias res.*"

"You need not swank about your Latin," he answers. "You remind me of the War Office. *They* (he has an undescribable way of accentuating the word *they* when he speaks of the War Office) *they,* too, like young officers to get acquainted with the 'preliminary facts in the course of the narrative'; while my opinion is: An officer must begin with the beginning. Look here,

P. C., suppose you had been Holy Moses, you would have written the Bible thus: 'God created man in his own image, after having created the great whales, and even at an earlier date two great lights. I may as well tell you that before that he had said: Let there be light, and that at the very beginning he had created heaven and earth.'"

And very sternly the Sergeant adds:

"I wish to know why you were in Munich...?"

"I wanted to improve myself in the noble art of composition."

"Don't interrupt me... and why you left it for Vienna?"

"I will tell you."

He: "Not yet. I must hear about another thing first. Did you miss a rat yesterday?"

I (*with an expression of guilt*): "I did."

He: "I thought as much. But that bacon was not bacon at all, and therefore ought not to have been bad. We will find a prompt remedy to this sort of things. Write down what I will dictate to you."

I take a sheet of paper and my fountain pen. It's one I found on the body of a dead

Turk, but, my word, he might have bought a decent one before getting shot.

This is what the Sergeant dictates :

"To the Editor of the *Evening News*, London, E.C.

"Sir,

"The enemy is in our midst, and our brave army is sold to alien scoundrels. Some Germans have secured Government contracts for bacon. But, of course, the Government, which never knows what to do when the *Evening News* has not told them beforehand, have omitted the principal thing. Is there a single word in these contracts to specify that bacon must be flesh of swine? What Tommy gets under the designation of bacon I don't know, but the German contractors do.

"I am,

"Sir,

"Yours truly..."

"You sign," he adds.

"Your name?" I ask.

"My name? Never!" he cries.

His name is the one thing of which he is

afraid. When he but thinks of his name his heart sinks. His name is his secret. He has enlisted under a false name. He calls himself Charles Young, but in reality he is Friedrich Wilhelm Young.

When my chum was born, his father was under the influence of the deeds of the then Crown Prince, our dearly beloved Big Willy's dad. It was at that time the fashion to admire, nay, to love the German. Love is blind, and old Young called young Young : Friedrich Wilhelm.

Under this name he fought in the Boer War and climbed up the ladder from Private to Captain, while his brother Charles only advanced from Private to Corporal. After the Boer War Friedrich Wilhelm went back to ordinary civil life, and poor Charles—the real Charles, of course—was gathered to his people (to avoid saying crudely that he died).

Now, when the world skirmish began, Friedrich Wilhelm wanted to enlist again. But he was afraid lest his name should be against him, and that *they,* taking him for a German, should not give him any chance of advancement. So he took his brother's papers and enlisted as Corporal Charles

Young. The commission, he thought, would come in time. He became Sergeant; the commission, however, failed to come. He did wonders, yet he did not... succeed.

One day, when Lord Kitchener came to France and had a look at his men, he saw my friend.

Kitchener had a marvellous memory. He recognized him.

"Your name?" he asked.

"Sergeant Young, sir."

"Any relation of Captain Friedrich Wilhelm Young, of the .....th regiment?"

"His brother, sir."

"What is he doing?"

"He is dead, sir."

"That is a great pity. He would be a Colonel by now, I am sure. He was very like you."

You cannot ask for more of a man, even of Kitchener. Sergeant Young asked for more, for a commission, but he did not get it. And since that day he is vexed, displeased, angry with his name. He positively dreads it. He never signs anything when he can avoid it, and if he does his signature is illegible. Even I must not sign for him.

So I put my own name at the end of the letter to the *Evening News,* my name, Patrick Cooper, out of which the Sergeant has made first P. C., then Police Constable, and finally Privy Councillor.

It is in the quality of Privy Councillor that I address my chum, when suddenly a vivid fusillade bursts forth.

"I say, Sergeant, don't you think we are damn short of hand grenades?"

Instantly the soldier in Charles Young awakes.

"How can it be possible?"

"I can't tell you."

For one minute he reflects. Then, suddenly, he bursts out:

"They will never learn any sense! So many hand grenades for each hundred yards! Whether the hundred yards are more or less exposed, they do not care! Without you, P. C., and me things would get desperate. But I'll keep an eye open."

There he stands erect, the nostrils of his big nose vibrating, flushed and eager, with his air of a natural leader. One more minute he ponders, and then:

"So long!" he says, and stamps away.

"I'm not going to let you go out in a rain of shrapnel like this," I cry, and try to hold him back. But he is not to be dissuaded, and storms out into the pelting rain of shells and bullets. Instantly the sound of his steps is lost in the roar of the iron downpour.

I pause for a moment. What can I do? This is such an everyday incident. Impending death is nothing in the least extraordinary. So, while the various sounds of war mingle in one single note, clamorous, huge, colossal, I resume my MS. and will tell a few of the "preliminary facts" Sergeant Young is so eager to know.

* * * *

Of course, I was born at Hampstead. Sons of insurance brokers often are. You cannot read a biography of Mozart without finding some reference to the influence the beautiful country of Salzburg (see first chapter) had on his talent. I had to do with Hampstead; Belsize Park to be exact. The result is obvious. Mozart, when five, performed his first concerto publicly in the hall of the Salzburg University. I did not. Still

I composed little waltzes. When six, Mozart was so innocent and natural that, after having played at Vienna before the Empress, he sprang upon her lap and kissed her heartily. I will not tell you tales and assert that I sprang upon Queen Victoria's lap, but I beat Mozart on one point: I published at eight (needless to say that dad paid the printing expenses) six sets of waltzes for the piano, while Mozart published only two sets of sonatas for the harpsichord and violin.

From this moment Mozart's life and mine differ more and more. Mozart came to London and lodged in Cecil Court, St. Martin's Lane, while I went to a preparatory school, the address of which I have forgotten. Afterwards Mozart removed to Frith Street, Soho, and gave concerts in the Great Hall at Spring Gardens and at Ranelagh, while I was sent to Harrow.

For years football and cricket interested me more than music. Contrary to the usual state of things, my mother did not believe in my musical talent, and my father did. Why! Had he not spent more than £30 on the printing of my waltzes (which, by the way, remained for ten years my *opus* one and

only)? Of course they had not sold; but that proved that I was a genius. Only potboilers sold, in dad's mind. Had Wagner's works sold at the beginning? A composer I was born, and a composer I should remain. Mother would shake her head, but father was used to having his own way. So I had plenty of piano lessons on the "You need not practise to become a good pianist" method, and at eighteen I started anew, composing some more waltzes, of course much more elaborate.

They were printed, and although they proved once more the work of a genius, viz.: unsaleable, I managed to make a handsome profit on them. Daniel Cooper and Co., Insurance Brokers, returned to his printer, who asked this time for £44. Poor dad was quite willing to shell out, but I found the figure preposterous.

"I bet you," I declared, "that I will get it for half the price."

Daniel Cooper and Co. at once handed me a cheque for £22, and after much useless running about I had the thing printed in Germany for £11, and very nicely, too.

In the following two years I had several

opportunities for similar transactions. But —I blush in writing it down—this was the only money I made.

Finally mother declared that she was sick of the whole business, that a musician must have some sort of knowledge of his art, that music and Hampstead were inconsistent, and that music was not only cheaply printed in Germany but also well taught.

Months, however, went by before at last I was sent away. This delay was caused by mother's idea, that I must go and study in Leipzig, because my music was being printed there, while I wished to go to Vienna, where most of the great composers had worked and starved.

Now, as I had on the one hand no wish at all to starve and but little desire to work, and on the other hand plenty of pocket money, no one will be surprised to hear that I postponed the beginning of my studies for a few days and had a look at the city of Strauss and Lanner. For as such Vienna appeared to me at first, and this impression remained to the last.

Of all the towns of Europe Vienna is the Terpsichorean town. The Viennese are pas-

sionately fond of dancing, and the women, distinguished as they are by beauty, charm, and elegance, indulge in its pleasure even at the cost of more solid qualities. And they are dressed! In Paris dressing is a luxury, in London it is a mistake, in Berlin an impoliteness, but in Vienna it is a fine art. Ah, the Viennese women! You must admire them, whether you see the fashionable ladies parading in their carriages on a May day in the principal Avenue of the Prater, or the jolly, boisterous girls whirling about in October in the dancing room of one of the village style inns where the new wine is sold.

And there is always the same swing of the waltz, ever melodious, never monotonous, the same in the large brilliant cafés of the Prater as in the small, modest wine shops.

Oh Vienna! Town of song and dance, where is thy happiness now?

How these gay, pleasure-loving, genial people, so full of *bonhomie* and so markedly different from the nasty inhabitants of Berlin, could start this horrible war, is the one thing that must astonish anybody who knows Vienna even a little. I will say here, that one of the reasons why I write this book

is precisely that I believe I have an explanation for this riddle, which seems nearly incapable of being solved.

These first days of Vienna appear to my memory as a kind of storm of jubilation, as a tempest of laughter and cries of amusement, of shouting and singing, of the frolicking of light feet, of the sweet weeping of violins.

And only the fact that I was living in a very middling first-class hotel spoiled my pleasure. It meant much money and little comfort. It meant, too, service by the worst waiters in the world. I don't know what London has ever found in the German or more correctly Austrian waiter. Happily the war has cleared him away. And even then a mistake, a prejudice was necessary. For we are not rid of him because he was a rotten waiter, but because the *Evening News* took this creature, the most brainless in the world, for a... spy.

At least, after a week, remorse came. Here I was, in Vienna, supposed to learn the gentle art of music, and in reality spending the money of Daniel Cooper and Co., Insurance Brokers, London, E.C., on... No! I am

not going to blush over all the details. Besides, you have sufficient imagination to blush for me.

But while I talk of blushing, I may as well tell you that I was not found worthy of entering the *conservatoire*. This I regretted only because I had heard of an abundant flora of pretty girls which was to be found there. For every other reason private lessons seemed to me the better way to get acquainted with the mysteries of harmony and counterpoint.

I enquired and my choice fell soon on a man who, as an organist, was a local celebrity, although he had failed to achieve much success as a composer. His name was Robert Hammer, he was a genius and accordingly poor.

When I went to see him, I was really shocked, so great seemed his distress. His apartment on the top floor of a house in the suburbs was composed of one small room. There was a small iron bed, covered with big parcels of manuscripts, and a baby grand piano, also covered with music paper. There was a plain deal table, a kitchen table in fact, again heaped with papers, and two

wooden chairs which excluded all idea of taking one's ease. The walls were hung with an old discoloured paper, and quite unadorned, save by a colour print representing the old Emperor Francis Joseph.

The master—he was nearly seventy—seemed exceedingly shy. He did not appear to be greatly struck with the idea of giving lessons to a Mozart, even to one born in Belsize Park. He absolutely refused to name a figure as a payment for his trouble, and I had to name mine which, from an insurance broker's point of view, was cheap enough, but which evidently was a decisive factor for a starving Viennese musician.

He accepted, and the lessons began.

How can I give you an idea of old Robert Hammer? Imagine a sort of middle height peasant with a flavour of a protestant parson, the head of a Roman Emperor, Claudius, for instance; bald, but so bald, as to make believe that it was an artificial baldness, an exaggerated baldness that extended to the neck and the temples; no beard, no moustaches, no eyebrows. He was always dressed in black; his trousers were shaped like those of a

British sailor, the coat ill fitting, too long and too wide, the sleeves reaching the finger-tips. His collar was so narrow that it was scarcely visible, and his black tie resembled a shoe lace. As for his boots, I think it must be he who invented the fashion of the dainty things we wear in the trenches. He was always rolling a little snuff between his fingers. When he sat down to improvise on the organ or the piano, that little snuff was dexterously moved from the right to the left and back to the right and again to the left, according as the one or the other hand was in the better position to play with three fingers only. Of course, by degrees all the snuff would be lost and scattered over the keys. Then only old Hammer would do the really impossible thing, namely, juggle away the imaginary remains of the snuff into his nose.

He was at once a genius and a perfect fool, an old man and a baby; he possessed all possible refinement in his art, and was ignorant of any in life; no organist ever reached his perfection; no musician was a worse teacher.

He was a very friendly, kind man as

long as his unbelievable absence of mind did not interfere with his kindness. He was one of the many types of Viennese musicians, and I do not think that you could find in the whole world one that would resemble him.

One morning, a fortnight or three weeks after my first lesson, he inquired about the life I was leading. And as I complained regarding the inconveniences of hotel life, he asked me why I should not hire a furnished room.

"I have been warned," I said, "that hotel life was still preferable to insect life."

He did not understand, and I had to explain.

"There are not insects everywhere," he answered. "You must know, of course, where to stay. There is my friend Doblana for instance, who has a very nice flat. His wife died a year ago, and he has now one room too many. Besides, his house would be the right thing for you, and you would enjoy his company. He is a musician who plays the horn in a most charming manner. You see, he is a Czech, and most Czechs have thick, fleshy lips, a peculiarity which enables them to play exceedingly well. The lips are

most important when playing the horn. The oldest classics did not know that. This is the reason for their awkward writing. The first who recognized what could be achieved by the horn were Méhul and Beethoven, but Weber had to be born to invent the new perfect language of this wonderful instrument, the most sensual and the most chaste."

Mr. Doblana was forgotten, and his furnished room too. Good old Hammer was raving over the qualities of the horn, over Meyerbeer's cleverness to write for it, and over the various ways modern composers used it, especially Wagner.

But if Hammer had forgotten Doblana, I had not. The possibility of living in a musician's decent house was too tempting, and I decided to call upon him that very afternoon.

* * * *

A rapid footstep interrupts me. It is Sergeant Young who comes back.

"That's all right, Police Constable," he says (I bet he has forgotten that my real name is Patrick Cooper), "you need not worry about these hand grenades, we'll have them

in half a mo. I've blackmailed the colonel in the most shameless way, but I've succeeded."

He takes my MS. and reads the second chapter.

"That will never do," he says after a while. "If you mix up our trench business with your Austrian affairs, how do you hope that the reader will find his way?"

"He will muddle through."

"No publisher will accept it in this form."

"Well, he will have it edited. Editors must live."

The Sergeant sees that there is nothing to be done, and goes on reading.

"You did not say why you left Munich," he remarks at last.

"Oh!" I answer lightly, "because I had a ticket for Vienna."

III.

THAT afternoon, as I had decided, I went to the Karlsgasse, where Mr. Doblana lived. My hotel being rather a long way from his address I took a *fiaker,* the most graceful two-horse carriage you can imagine. *Fiakers* are well-known for their jolly cabbies. Was it their fame which made me look at this one, or was it his face that attracted me? I cannot tell, but when I did look at him, I was startled. For I knew the man, or thought so for a moment. He was at once alike to the irascible Frenchman whom Destiny had obliged to make room for the fair Comtesse (see chapter one), and to the conductor who soon afterwards had accepted a backsheesh for certain services. But he seemed a little younger and had that special low class smartness which distinguishes the Viennese cabman. So I concluded that after all this was only a coincidence. Never-

theless it was extraordinary that I should see in so short time three people having the same black hair, the same black moustache and pointed tuft of beard on their chin, and, above all, the same somewhat mocking expression on their features.

When I arrived in the Karlsgasse, I was still so impressed with my cabbie, that I had a feeling, when I first saw Mr. Doblana, that he too was greatly alike to somebody I knew. The funniest thing is that really he did resemble someone; but at this first meeting I could not possibly remember who it was.

I found an elderly refined man with an exceedingly sorrowful expression in his face. This expression was increased by his speech. He pronounced his German with a Czech accent, which makes people speak with a kind of sad sing-song. Many Slavs always seem to talk as if they were making a visit of condolence.

Now, Mr. Doblana was really mourning. And I had to hear with some details the story of Mrs. Doblana, whom he had lost a year ago. She had been first a comic-opera singer, and later had earned good money by giving singing lessons. This made me

understand how it was possible that a horn-player, even a first horn-player at the Imperial Opera, could afford such a fine flat. For it was, indeed, a handsome apartment.

The knowledge of its disposition, reader dear, has some importance for the understanding of events which I will relate to you in due course. The simplest thing would be to draw a plan of the apartment, but, somehow, I am too proud to fight against my incapacity as a draughtsman, and I remember that Conan Doyle always rises up to circumstances when the question is the description of some locality. Then, why shouldn't I?

You know that in a decently built English house you can get out from any room direct to the hall or a landing. In Vienna it is otherwise. The finer the apartment and the greater the number of rooms, the less opportunity of getting out of them directly into the ante-room. The inconvenience is really ideal.

In addition to the entrance door there were but two doors in Mr. Doblana's hall, one leading to the front rooms, the other to the back rooms. In front there were four.

The one entered when coming from the hall was the *salon,* to its right was situated what was destined to be my room, where until her mother's death Miss Doblana had lived. To the left of the *salon* there was first the musician's room and then his daughter's, the last of the four, which had belonged in times gone by to Mrs. Doblana. The widower evidently had not been able to bear the emptiness of her apartment. This was the reason why Miss Doblana now lived there. At present she was rather unwell and confined to her room.

I would certainly be all right and have my own privacy, said Mr. Doblana; I would have a latch-key, and through the *salon* could get in and out of the flat without disturbing anybody. Nor would I be disturbed if I wanted to work. Miss Doblana had singing lessons, she was taking them at her master's house. At home, in the drawing room, she practised only for half an hour a day. I might dispose of the piano all the rest of the time.

I declared that I was not much of a worker, (little did I suspect that I was to compose in the Karlsgasse at Vienna the

only score of any importance and value which I ever have written and am likely to write). If Mr. Doblana, whom I knew to be a distinguished composer, wanted the piano I would certainly not drive him away.

My host, visibly flattered by the "distinguished composer," led me out into the ante-room and from there into the back-rooms of his flat. There was a dining room and his studio, and further away the kitchen and the maid's room.

"It is here," said Mr. Doblana, when we entered his studio, "that I used to have my happiest hours. Here I compose, without any instrument. It is very rare that I go to the piano and try an effect, and when I do it at all, it is really only from laziness, or as a little relaxation."

What a difference between Doblana's snug little studio and Hammer's poverty-stricken abode! And yet, Hammer was a genius, who played the organ at St. Stephen's as nobody perhaps ever did, but played it *gratis pro Deo* (literally to understand!) He used to say: "Even old Hammer must have some pleasure from time to time, and he gets it when he plays at St.

Stephen's; and even God, to Whom all people, including myself, come lamenting and complaining, even God must have a little pleasure from time to time, and He gets it too when Hammer plays at St. Stephen's. Now, why should I accept any money? Is it for my pleasure or for His?"

As for Doblana, the little I know I owe to him, and not to old Hammer; but this does not in the least prevent me from recognizing the insipidity of the pretty tunes he used to write for his ballets which were performed at the Opera, the slight ballets at the Grand Opera, out of which he succeeded in making quite a decent amount of money. Nor did he play the horn for the love of God. He was a resourceful man, Anton Doblana, he had his salaries at the Opera, at the Imperial Chapel, and at the Conservatoire, he had his royalties, and for some time he had me.

"You will be quite well here," he assured me when I took leave, "and mind you, I am not always such a peevish fellow as I am now. I am upset because of a very ugly occurrence that befell me some time ago. I hope I will forget soon."

What had happened to him, he did not tell me, and I went away, glad to have secured quarters which seemed to be almost the ideal thing. And I still wondered where I could have known an individual so like him that I always had the impression of having seen Doblana before.

The next day, when I moved in, Fanny, the maid, a fair plump little object, showed me in. She was a young chatterbox, but a friendly one. Mr. Doblana was out, and *Fräulein* was not visible; but she, Fanny, would make me comfortable, which she did in fact with much obligingness. In consequence she was tipped accordingly.

You see, I was not what one may call spoiled. Only a year before, when I had been staying for a month with the Dickses at Bedford (Dicks senior is an intimate friend of the senior partner of Daniel Cooper & Co., Ltd., and has an only daughter, besides a fine estate at Bedford), well, I was also shown in by a housemaid, but who treated me as if she were a duchess, which perhaps she was, and who carried the hot water for my use as if she were the Archbishop of Canterbury going to anoint the King. (By the way: God save him and

give him victory!)—Now, if I had tipped that Midland goddess with gold, why should I not make friends with plain Fanny on a silver basis?

Fanny kissed my hand and I felt silly. I was not yet used to the shameless way in which Viennese people of the lower class throw themselves on any hand they may think kissable, viz. : capable of kissing back, the kiss of a hand being hard, round, and having a metallic sound when you let it fall.

Anyhow, that two crown piece conquered Fanny. Parents, when reading this, should not feel incensed because of the extravagance of their children. An Austrian crown is worth less than a shilling, and in stating this I do not think only of the Imperial crown.—When, an hour later, I left to take my lesson with old Hammer, my things were in order, and all I could do was heroically to resist my wish to tip Fanny again when I asked her to oil my door, which was creaking badly.

You know that to go out I had to cross the *salon*. As I was halfway through it, the door opposite mine, the one which was

leading to Mr. Doblana's room, was suddenly closed. Perhaps my opening the door of my own room had caused a draught, Vienna being always a windy place, and thus the opposite door had been slammed. But instinctively I felt that there was something else. Miss Doblana, who was, may be, not so unwell as it pleased her father to say, had had, no doubt, a fit of curiosity and had watched me. I imagined that, her hair being adorned with hair-curlers (I did not know then that this achievement of Western civilisation had not yet reached oriental Vienna), she had rapidly hidden herself from my attention.

I ought to tell you that this was quite unnecessary. There were plenty of nice girls in Vienna whom I had leisure to look at, but somehow I had no mind for them. Much less for a spinster who, to judge from her father's age, was probably ten years my elder and wore hair-curlers. In fact, I had not been able to forget my fair Comtesse of Salzburg fame; and I lived in an unceasing hope that I might see her again.

* * * *

A voice to my right calls my name. But there is no-one to my right. And then a shout of laughter resounds to my left. It is Private Pringle, who in civil life is a ventriloquist and enjoys playing such tricks. So do we. To-day he plays beside this the part of a postman, and he has a letter for me. It is from Daniel Cooper and consort. The consort treats me as a naughty boy, because I write so little, and could I not tell her some pretty story about the war? And whether I was careful and avoided these wicked shells?

The pater wants to know whether some music paper would be welcome; I ought to write a good military march, so that English soldiers could at last stop playing Austrian marches.

And both of them tell me that Bean was simply dying with anxiety for me. Bean is Violet Dicks. She hates flower names and prefers to be a vegetable. In war time evidently vegetables have a greater value than flowers, but she had already had this mad idea in peace time, from the very day when her tiny brain awoke to wisdom. And yet, she is in love with me. If she knew

that I am writing the story of another girl! No, little Bean, no! Anyhow, not yet—if ever! And so I return to Vienna.

I had made a rule of going every evening to a theatre. The theatres are beautiful, and the performances generally excellent. This evening, the first day of my stay at the Karlsgasse, I went to the *Burg* theatre to see *Macbeth*. I had arranged with Mr. Doblana that we should meet at a certain café after the performance.

I found him there sitting at a large round table amongst his friends, a dozen or more, who were all actors, or artists, or belonged in some fashion to the theatrical world. One of them was an officer, but seemed nevertheless to belong to the company. They called him "*Herr Graf.*" Doblana was sitting to his left and seemed to have kept a place next to himself for me.

I had, on my journey to Vienna, stopped in various towns in Germany, here for a few days, there for a few weeks, and had been introduced to some such companies. But while in Germany women were admitted, actresses mostly, we were only men in

Vienna. This may account for the fact that the conversation was generally much more of a serious character. There was but one individual, a Hungarian, who with a loud and discordant voice told funny yarns and tried to attract the general attention. He was a theatrical agent, named Maurus Giulay, and remarkable by the quantity of black hair which grew in his nose instead of on his head, and by the amount of diamonds which adorned his coarse, greasy fingers. His stomach was rather protuberant. So was a roll of fat that protruded beyond the back of his collar. He displeased me intensely, and I took an immediate dislike to him.

Not knowing anybody present I took no part in the conversation. Besides, I was not acquainted with the subjects which were being discussed. So it happened that keeping quiet, from no choice of my own, I overheard a part of the dialogue which just was taking place between Doblana and the *Herr Graf*.... My host was entreating his neighbour not to take a certain matter as lightly as he did.

"After all," he said, "your share is as

large as mine, so should your interest be!"

"If it is a question of money," retorted the other, "although I don't owe you anything, you know that you may count on any compensation from me for the ill-luck which has befallen you."

"I know that you are always generous," answered Doblana, "and I thank you from my heart. But it is not a question of money. Think only: the result of a full year's work, and it has been announced to the press..."

"You know that I was always against this announcement."

"I know it and deplore it. For this is the explanation of your indifference now. You had taken a prejudice against the thing. But should it therefore be lost altogether?"

"Well," said the *Herr Graf* haughtily, "I do not care, and I have heard enough of the whole affair."

Whereupon Mr. Doblana looked very distressed and assumed an air of an even more unspeakable sadness than that which I had noticed when I first had seen him.

At this moment a new guest arrived, evidently a popular knight of this Round Table, for they were all eager to shake hands

with him. If he was not King Arthur himself, he was nevertheless something very near to this exalted personage, namely, Vienna's most celebrated actor, Alfred Bischoff.

The table was rather full, however he managed to squeeze himself between Doblana and me. As he did so, he uttered some words of apology. I had not recognized this clean shaven man with his heavy eyelids and deep drawn features, but I recollected at once his incomparable voice. If I am not much of a musician, after all, I have at least good ears, a minor detail for a composer, when you think of Beethoven.

"Mr. Bischoff," I cried, "I have just had one of the greatest experiences one can imagine: your Macbeth. How happy I am to make your acquaintance!"

He looked at me.

"You are an Englishman," he said, which made me think that if all was said my accent must be more pronounced than my vanity would have wished; yet, though vexed, I answered in a meek affirmative.

"Then," he continued, "there is no danger of your being an Anti-Semite and of your withdrawing your admiration once you

have heard from Alfred Bischoff himself, that he is neither a bishop, nor even a Christian at all, but a simple Jew named Aaron Cohn."

The *Herr Graf* distorted his features a little.

"You see," went on the great actor, "our friend Alphons Hector..." and he nodded at the *Herr Graf,* "smells something like sulphur. After all he would like to have me burned." And he added laughing: "It's in the blood, *Herr Graf,* and it cannot be helped. And to think that you are the best of the lot!"

Mr. Bischoff—for I prefer to call him by this name which he has made so celebrated—turned to me and said:

"You English are a great nation. Freedom is your motto. Freedom in everything—freedom even in religion. A Jew, with you, is as complete a human being as a Christian. You have no Anti-Semitism."

"May I take it," I asked him, "that there is a little gratitude in your masterly interpretation of our Shakespeare?"

"No," replied he, "not in the least. Our art is art for art's sake. And if I

succeed in rendering Shakespeare's meaning, it is due to our possessing good translations of his works."

"That may be," I declared, "but then the German tongue is so suitable to translations."

At once he flew up in a rage. And the same man who just had called us a great nation used the most abusive terms against us.

"As if any tongue were unsuitable to translations. But, of course, with you, with mean shopkeepers, with you and your mercenary point of view, how could you have good translations? I have been asked by one of your English firms to translate an English play, a rotten one, of course. 'We usually pay seven and sixpence a thousand words,' they wrote, 'but in consideration of your fame, we would pay anything up to ten shillings a thousand.' As if this could be a decisive factor! As if it were not before all necessary to be inspired by the original! And it has always been like that. A workman's pay for a workman's job, while translating in reality is the most difficult occupation in literature. Do you know who trans-

lated *Macbeth* into German? Wieland, a classic, Voss, a classic, Schiller, a classic, and finally Schlegel and Tieck, two classics, whose translation you have heard this evening. Goethe translated the tragedies of Voltaire and novels by Diderot and Cellini's memoirs. And Schiller translated Virgil and a Greek tragedy, and Racine's *Phaedra,* and French and Italian comedies. Do you think they did it for seven and sixpence a thousand words or even for ten shillings? No! They did it out of enthusiasm, out of the one feeling which creates everything great in art. They thought theirs a holy mission, and thus, amongst other things, they originated the art of translating. For translating is an art with us, while it is pot-boiling with you."

He remained silent for a minute or so.

"Yes," he said then a little more composedly, "we have excellent translations of *Macbeth,* wonderful translations. Yet we do not know how to play it."

"What do you mean?" I asked rather astonished.

"For instance," he replied, "when in the first act the witches say to me:

'All hail, Macbeth! hail to thee, thane of Glamis!
All hail, Macbeth! hail to thee, thane of Cawdor!
All hail, Macbeth! thou shalt be king hereafter!'

the stage manager this evening made some noise with a gong and destroyed that moment of great impression, into which Banquo is to murmur:

'Good sir, why do you start, and seem to fear
Things that do sound so fair?'

Indeed, I had seemed to start, not because of the prophecy, but because of the gong. And Klein who, God knows, is a fine actor, was obliged to speak his words aloud instead of murmuring them. The scene was spoiled. And so it went through the whole evening. The entire tragedy is a tissue of terror, of trembling, of anxious forebodings, of dreadful silence, and it was torn into rags this evening. But the worst of all was the Lady Macbeth."

Poor me! How difficult it seemed to satisfy Mr. Bischoff. I had thought the performance extraordinary. I had been so much impressed by the mysterious way in which the whole thing had been played. At one moment I had not been able to distinguish whether Macbeth had sighed or

whether the night wind had howled in the chimney. Everything had seemed to me to be but one soul. When Macbeth after the murder had come and looked at his bloody hands and had muttered :

'This is a sorry sight.'

I had felt as though I had done the deed myself with him. And Lady Macbeth! How dreadful she had been, especially in the dream scene.

"Lady Macbeth!" went on Mr. Bischoff, "of course, it is Goethe who made the great, fatal mistake when he called her a super-witch. Our actresses make a monster of her. I did not feel seduced by our Lady Macbeth this evening. She ought to flatter, to cajole me. She ought to be a beautiful, flexible cat, she ought to be trembling with love and to shudder herself before her awful thoughts and words. And at the end, when she walks in her sleep, I don't want her to come and to declaim. I want her to be ill and feverish and weak, weak as a child, yes, as a child. I want her to say in a childish, soft voice :

'Yet here's a spot.'

and I want her to weep when she says :

'Who would have thought the old man to have so much blood in him ?'

I want her to be a broken, ruined woman, and I want you, the spectator, to pity her."

I listened surprised, for what he said seemed true to me.

"Look here, sir," he went on. "You are a composer, or will be one. There has never been a more splendid task for a musician than to write a musical drama on *Macbeth,* to express all that the poet left untold, to show this couple of criminals as poor human beings, to change their poison into tears."

The next day I was quite full of these ideas: they satiated my brain. *Macbeth—Macbeth, an opera*—an opera by Patrick Cooper, an opera with original Scotch tunes, perhaps with bagpipes, an opera with a Lady Macbeth full of charm instead of full of hideousness, an opera with strange mysterious sounds... For the first time I thought that I was understanding Hammer's extraordinary theory, that there were no harmonies, but only voices...

I think I was a ridiculous youth then. Anyhow, I like myself better in khaki. And, strange to say, the music I hear now, the

roar of the guns, has its fearful beauty, too.

I believe the editor will cancel this. Of course it is not easy to write a book in such surroundings. I should like to see you trying to do it. Sometimes I admire myself. But then I have only to think of the man who works at the chemistry treatise, and you ought to see how bashful I can become.

Well, to return to my subject, the day after *Macbeth* rather resembled its predecessor, for in the morning I was again watched through the partly opened door, and in the evening I went to the opera, where they played *Tannhäuser*. Mr. Doblana had given me a ticket so that I might hear him blowing his part.

On the evening before Mr. Bischoff had been far from enthusiastic about *Macbeth*. I tried to imitate him re *Tannhäuser*. I did not think the performance very extraordinary. Venus ought to have had more charm, and her pink chemise (or was it a dress robe?) did not provide the illusion I was looking for. Tannhäuser was rather elderly and seemed not to have understood the problem of sacred love *versus* profane love. And he treated Venus as though she

had been his "Missus," and Elizabeth as though she had been his "fancy lady"; and yet it was Venus who was the "fancy lady." But the worst was Elizabeth. She was a beautiful, fair wig, large and wavering, with a stately lady in front; the whole had a strong voice, which wavered too. I had always imagined Elizabeth as a young girl with long rich plaits thrown in front of her over her shoulders, a girl, nice and pure and not yet womanly at all. While the one I saw seemed to be an aunt of the Landgrave, and not his niece.

Mr. Doblana and I met again after the performance. But we had only a hasty supper at a restaurant before we went home. For it was already late, and the horn-player had a heavy rehearsal before him which was to begin at ten o'clock next morning.

The house was very quiet when we arrived. Midnight was just striking at the Karl's Church. There was not a sign of life. In the *salon* a tiny flame of gas was burning. We parted wishing each other a good night; Mr. Doblana extinguished the little gas flame and went into his room, I into mine.

There I lit my chandelier. As I did so I noticed well in evidence on my table an envelope bearing my name. I did not know the writing, which was thin and pointed, a woman's hand. I tore the envelope open. Inside, on a half-sheet of paper, were written the words: "Do not bolt your door this night." There was no signature.

Now, please, darling reader, imagine my feelings.

There I was in a strange house and in a strange town, where I had no feminine acquaintances. (I beg Fanny's pardon, but as I had tipped her but the day before, she did not count.) And there was a female bidding me not to bolt my door.

Imagine further, that I had slept little the night before, the sitting at the café having lasted long, up to the small hours. Imagine that the whole day I had mentally worked hard on *Macbeth,* an opera in five acts by Patrick Cooper. Imagine also that I had heard an expanded, tiring performance of *Tannhäuser* and that I felt sleepy and little disposed for receiving visits. But fancy also that I was twenty-one and thirsting for adventures; yet that I was

clever enough to guess that the lady who wished to see me was that elderly spinster, Miss Doblana, with her curler-pins, a detail which made the adventure less desirable. Think of all that, and then of an idea which occurred to my shrewd brain, namely, that, after all, it was perhaps not Miss Doblana who wanted that nocturnal interview, for in that case she would have to cross her father's room. That, therefore, the mysterious lady was hidden in one of the backrooms whither she must have penetrated with the help of Fanny. That there was but one lady who could have sufficient interest in my whereabouts to have taken the trouble of finding out where I was staying; one, the Comtesse! For as I had told her the name of the hotel where I was going to stay, and as I had left my new address when I departed from the said hotel, nothing was more natural and easy than to find me. But nothing was more unnatural than to call upon me in the middle of the night. No! it was not the Comtesse, It was the daughter of my horn-player.

There was another dilemma. Should I take off my boots? Was it possible to await a lady at such an hour in slippers? I had

not much experience in affairs of that sort.

In my despair I used bad language, threw myself into an easy chair and took my Shakespeare. Destiny had made me take it with me when I left Hampstead. Since this morning it had been lying on the table, in case of emergencies. I opened it and started reading *Macbeth*.

Then a funny thing happened. Lady Macbeth was no longer present at the famous banquet, but she presided in the equally famous hall over a competition of Scotch bards, who tried to play Wagner on their bagpipes. As they did not succeed the Landgrave said most rudely: "Go to... Venus!" whereupon they all disappeared. Lady Macbeth in the same moment became the fair Landgravine Elizabeth, but not the one I had seen at the Opera this evening, for she had two beautiful plaits thrown over her shoulders and falling upon her bosom, exactly as I had wished it, and she was young and uncommonly pretty. She carried a taper which allowed me to see the funniest detail, namely, a certain likeness, to whom do you think, wise reader? To the Comtesse.

Some slight noise made me start, and

Shakespeare tumbled down to the floor. Near the door, with a candle in her hand, exactly as Lady Macbeth ought to come in the dream scene, a forlorn child—and exactly dressed as I had wished Elizabeth to be dressed, in a long white gown, with long, rich, fair plaits falling on her bosom—there stood my Comtesse. As she saw me awakening from my dream, she put her left forefinger on her thick, fleshy lips and whispered anxiously :

"Don't talk aloud."

I wanted to take her light, to press, nay! to kiss her hands, but she prevented it.

"I have come," she said, "to ask you, whatever might happen, not to tell my father that you met me at Salzburg."

"I promise that, Miss Doblana .."

You see, clever reader, I had grasped the situation quite as quickly as you, I had realized who the mysterious person was to whom Mr. Doblana was so greatly alike, that it had struck me on my first visit at the Karlsgasse; I had devined that SHE was neither a Comtesse, nor an elderly spinster with hair-curlers, nor Lady Macbeth, nor even the Landgravine as I had wished her,

but Miss Doblana, who was apparently not as ill as her father had told me, yet very pale.

"I promise, but why?"

This "Why" was not precisely chivalrous, and you might even call it indiscreet, but Miss Doblana evidently expected the question.

"To-morrow morning," she replied, "my father has a long rehearsal at the opera. He leaves here at a quarter to ten and will not be home before two. I will be in the *salon* the whole time during his absence. If you wish it I will then tell you all."

It was said in the faintest whisper. Without a sound she opened the door and disappeared. Not even the door creaked. Fanny had done her duty.

But was it Fanny?

IV.

HOW long have I been writing? I don't know. But there is Sergeant Young coming back.

"You had better get ready," he says, "there is going to be an attack. The Germans are coming over this way."

"Ah!" I answer quietly and begin preparing myself.

"I dare say," goes on the Sergeant, "that the Germans are very Hun-wise. It will be a Hun-pleasant job for them."

When he starts on those puns it is a sign that he is in a good temper.

"If they think that they will get Hun-perturbed into our trenches, they make a Hun-believable mistake. These trenches are Hun-approachable."

But time passes, ten minutes, twenty minutes, and no order comes. You cannot imagine how bored one is during the long hours of waiting between attacks, but the

anxiety which precedes the moments of real danger makes up for these weary intervals.

"Have you written something more?" finally asks Charlie.

Silently I offer him the sheets, and he begins to read. Meanwhile I am thinking that I ought to write to dad and tell him that I cannot compose a march in the trenches because of the booming of the guns which will never keep time—and to mamma that nothing was easier than to avoid the shells; she need not know that they cannot always avoid us—and to Bean, that there was no reason for anxiety at all, war being only an exaggerated picnic and casualties some sort of indigestion.

"I say," declares Sergeant Young, who has read the chapter in less time than was necessary, "I say, your Miss Doblana behaves in a rather Hun-maidenly manner. To call in the middle of the night upon a young, Hun-married man, with her hair Hun-done! I am afraid the public will find it Hun-conventional and even Hun-pardonable. Of course, she was in love with the pretty Salzburg officer."

"You jump to conclusions. I do not

think that anything in my story may have suggested that."

"In this case, what did you think of her visit?"

"I thought... that she had been obliged to go across her father's room, and that she would not have done so without some necessity. Her fear had been great, to judge from her wide eyes and her paleness. Would she have undergone any risk if there had been some chance of avoiding it?"

"Of course—if it was Hun-avoidable! And what did you feel?"

"Perhaps you think that I felt very happy? Certainly, there was joy in my knowledge of having found her again. There was also, as I have written, a desire to kiss her beautiful hands. But, above all, above my surprise, my joy, and my desire, there was apprehension lest her father should have noticed her absence, lest her step, in spite of its lightness, should have been audible in the deep silence of the night. What would I have done if the door had opened and the sad, old man had appeared and reproached me with having violated his hospitality?"

"I see. You had a little chilliness, like when you heard the bullets whistling around you for the first time and felt the wind caused by the shells. It's a bit Hun-canny and one shivers a little, but one goes on. Did you?"

"I did. But it was not an easy affair. For, to begin with, the next morning our interview was spoiled. It was the first time since my arrival in his house that Doblana was to be absent for several hours. And, while on the two previous days he had left the door of his room open, this time he had locked his daughter in. I waited in the *salon* for a good while, in vain."

"It must have been Hun-comfortable."

"At last I heard a little noise at Mr. Doblana's door, as though some small dog were scratching at it. And a piece of note paper was pushed through the split at the bottom of the door into the *salon*. At once I rushed forth to it. As I came to the door I heard a well-known voice, *her* voice, talking through the door."

"'Is that you Mr. Cooper?'—'Yes.'—'Are you alone?'—'Yes.'—'Can you open this door?'

"I tried. It was locked.

"'I cannot.'—'Nor can I. Take the letter I have pushed under the door. Read it and then destroy it. Good-bye.'

"I tried to talk more, but there was no answer. So I read the letter. It ran something like this:

> 'My father has locked me in. I can tell you nothing through the door. But you may trust Fanny. She will do anything for a tip. I have no money, but you have.'

And it was signed Mitzi D."

I look at the Sergeant. He seems no more interested in my story than if I were preaching a sermon in a Sunday School. Of course, I keep the sequel to myself, namely, how Fanny and I conspired to call in a locksmith who promised to make a key within two hours, but forgot to tell us that these two hours were to begin only three days later. Punctuality is a virtue of which no workman ever wishes to pride himself, not even in Austria.

The Sergeant has an air as though he were dreaming, an absent-minded air which he sometimes assumes. When he is vision-

ary like that, nothing can make him follow other people's thoughts. But he makes no secrets of his ideas, and sooner or later we learn what is in his mind. So I wait in the respectful silence a Lance-Corporal owes to his superior officer.

Suddenly he jumps up.

"P.C.," he cries, "I firmly believe that I will get my commission to-day!"

It was about time he did get it! Thrice already he has purchased an officer's kit. Twice he has lost it. Let us hope that the third will serve.

"And whence does that belief come?" I ask him.

"I told you that I got a supplementary lot of hand grenades by blackmailing the Colonel. Well, it has occurred to me that I might try the same trick for obtaining my commission. Where protection, ability, and courage have failed, blackmailing might succeed."

"Yes," I answer somewhat doubtfully, "but how will you blackmail him?"

"That," he declares solemnly, "is of course a secret between him and me!"

Mr. Reader will understand me, if I

state that I grew curious.

"Is there a woman at the bottom of it?"

You ought to have heard the Sergeant's fit of laughter. He does not laugh very often, our Charlie, but when he does, it is the noisiest laugh in the world. Develish we call it. It is indeed a terrific laughter, long and irresistible. Finally, however, he will be able to utter some words. This time he says:

"No! Dear me, no! There wasn't a woman at the bottom of it—no! There was something quite different!"

At this moment the order comes, the order which we had been waiting for during an hour. In single file we march through the communication trenches.

Now, if you think, impatient reader, that I will annoy you with a detailed description of the attack, you are greatly mistaken. Firstly, you have doubtless read many such descriptions in the papers and do not want another. Secondly, I could not depict the attack, because I had another business than that of observing, Lance-Corporals not being, generally, Special Correspondents. Finally, you have no idea how

easily one forgets the details. They are rapidly dimmed in the fog of war.

Yet I remember the Germans coming very near us and being beaten back. And I remember, too, the following incidents:

On our way the Sergeant tells me that it is to-day two years since he saw *Parsifal* in London, which he declares being not only a Hun-palatable, tedious work, but also a Hun-Christian one mocking the Mass and acceptable only from the Hun's point of view, as Pan-Germanic propaganda. Whereupon we hear from somewhere the bells of the holy Grail ringing. It is Pringle, the ventriloquist, who provides them, of course.

Cotton, the chemist, who enjoys quite naturally the nickname Guncotton, and who habitually speaks a special language nobody can understand (for it is crammed with chemical formulas), starts a great sniffing performance. At last he declares that there is a distinct scent of H_2SO_4, and wonders, wonders, wonders.

Nor is his astonishment incomprehensible. H_2SO_4 is sulphuric acid, and what he smells is in reality cabbages being cooked somewhere in a neighbouring trench.

Later on I remember our throwing hand-grenades. The Sergeant is very clever at that game, which he accompanies with fits of his devilish laughter. When a shell bursts near us without hurting anybody, he laughs again, rather imitating the laughter of Mephisto in the third act of *Faust*.

The Colonel is quite near us, and Charlie by his side. There is a periscope and the Colonel can see whatever we achieve.

The Sergeant throws another hand grenade.

"Ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha!" he laughs, "one more Hun Hun-done!"

"That was a nice one," states the Colonel.

"What of my commission, Sir?" risks Charlie.

But he has no luck. In the same moment the Colonel's periscope is smashed by some unkind shell. Spontaneously Charles Young laughs.

The Colonel, who is no coward, at once climbs up the parapet.

"What are you doing there, sir?" cries Charlie.

No answer.

"You'll be killed in a jiffy!"

No answer.

"But that's madness! Come back!"

The Colonel shouts something which we cannot understand in the noise, probably "Shut up!" and stands there amidst the bullets which are immediately directed at him.

"You damn fool!" thunders Charlie, "will you come down?"

This time the Colonel turns round and shouts so strongly that I can hear the words:

"You will be court-martialled for that!"

But in the next instant Charlie runs up to him:

"I don't care! And if you don't come down at once I'll tell the company your secret."

He has caught the Colonel's arm and drags him down to relative safety. And another fit of laughter follows.

I wonder. Has he won his commission or decidedly lost it? But there is no time for wondering. A big shell, a Jack Johnson, falls in our trench. There is a terrific explosion, and I see Charlie thrown up into

the air, three or four yards up, and coming back.

No one else is wounded, although we were all shaking a bit. Even the Colonel.

There he lies, my chum, my Charlie, quite pale, white as a corpse, save for the blood that covers his big nose. Somebody bends over him and says :

"Some water, quick!"

Off runs Guncotton shouting :

"H_2O!"

But after a minute he comes back with real water. Nobody utters a word while poor Charlie's nose is washed. At last the Colonel, much affected, says :

"He has finished swearing and laughing. Poor fellow, he has at last met his fate."

And solemnly—for he is a very religious man—he adds :

"May the Lord have mercy upon his soul."

Now, is it the Colonel's speech that rouses him, or is it the effect of the fresh water? But the answer comes at once :

"Nonsense!" says the Sergeant, "I am quite Hun-hurt!" and laughs once more.

"Where am I? In hell?"

The Colonel takes flight, although, I repeat it, he is no coward.

* * * *

I am back in my trench, and the time for being bored has come once more. So I return to Vienna and to Mitzi Doblana, with apologies to Bean in case of her ever reading this book.

I think you will have noticed the great difficulty I experienced in meeting Miss Mitzi. First I suffered from a closed door and then from a locksmith of remarkable punctuality. When at last I had secured the key, which was to be not only the means of opening that hostile door but also of solving a mystery, my landlord had no long rehearsal for another couple of days. Thus nearly a week had passed since I had had her promise of an interview, and in all these days there arose not the slightest opportunity of catching a glimpse of her.

Now, if you have the least idea of the peculiar qualities of a young man's heart, you will know that such waiting is the right thing to inflame it, namely, the heart.

Therefore, when finally we met, fancy my joy as I saw her advancing towards me and presenting me one of those beautiful hands of hers with a sweet: "At last!"

Yes, at last! At last she let me kiss her hand—as was due to me since that Sunday evening when she had abandoned my bags and valises, and myself into the bargain. I need not tell you that I paid myself heartily and that, while I was kissing that loveable hand I kissed it thoroughly. It was an enchanting hand, with graceful nails and with a soft, fascinating skin. And, my word, what a soap she used, a bewitchingly scented soap.

Footnote by the gentle reader: P. C., go on with your story!

Well, I will. Yet it is not my, but Miss Mitzi's story!

By the way, Mitzi is a Viennese diminutive of Marie, and I ought to translate it by Pussy, for it is used equally for cats and girls, which proves that the Viennese have some trifling knowledge of psychology.

I began by telling her that there had been no danger of her father asking me questions about the Salzburg trip. How

could he have guessed that we had travelled together from Salzburg to Vienna?

Her answer was that she never had feared such a thing. It was of me that she was afraid.

"For the present I am locked up, as you have noticed; but sooner or later I will be released. My father will then present us to each other, and I did not want you to exclaim at that moment: 'Oh! but we have met already.'"

"Be assured that I will not make the slightest blunder."

"Now," she went on, "I suppose that you wish to have an explanation."

"I cannot deny that I feel curious. But I will not be inquisitive..."

"And I will be candid. It is not in order to satisfy your curiosity that I am prepared to give you an explanation, but because I hope that you will help me. You are probably the only person who can."

I trust that my dear readers do not place so much confidence in Patrick Cooper as did Miss Doblana. I don't want to mislead anybody by insinuating that her belief in my capacities was in any way justified. But I

must state one thing: My heart leaped up. Not only were we to share a secret, but I was to be allowed to help her! I accordingly promised what you may expect: discretion and help.

"I must begin at the beginning."

(Holy Sergeant Young, you will be pleased with this young lady who shares your principles.)

"I am taking singing lessons. People say I have a nice voice. It is not a strong one, but it is expressive. My aim is to become an operatic singer, though my father strongly objects. This is strange, as mother herself was a singer. Yet, strange as it may seem, there is a reason for it. When mother married she did not tell him that she was a sister of no lesser person than La Carina. Of course, you know La Carina?"

I did not, and I thought best to plead guilty.

"You do not know La Carina?" exclaimed Mitzi. "But then—then—then I must begin at the beginning."

(Holy Sergeant Young, etc., etc., as before.)

"La Carina was a celebrated dancer,

exceedingly beautiful and clever, and famous for her charming, tiny feet as well as for..."

She hesitated.

"Well?" asked I, trying by my question to help her.

Miss Mitzi blushed and finished her sentence in a whisper:

"... As for her lover. It seems hardly believable that you never should have heard of her adventures with the Archduke Alphons Hector."

Now, distinguished reader, you—being endowed with a better brain than I—will, no doubt, remember that name Alphons Hector. And you will say: Alphons Hector, that is how the *Herr Graf* on the evening of *Macbeth* was called by Bischoff, the actor.

Readers are supposed to have good memories. I apparently have a bad one. When I heard Miss Mitzi pronouncing these two names "Alphons Hector" they did not bring any recollection to my brain.

"How my aunt Kathi—that was La Carina's real name—eloped with the Archduke, how he wanted to marry her, how the Emperor frustrated that plan, is a story which has been told so often that I am really

surprised that you should not know it."

"Perhaps I was not allowed..."

"But was it not in the English papers?"

"English papers never meddle with things matrimonial, except when they reach the Divorce Court."

Miss Mitzi laughed.

"Well," she said, "this affair did not reach the Divorce Court, but it was scandalous enough. Still, my father would never have guessed our connexion with royalty, had not my mother when I was nine decided to send me to a certain high-class school, which could not be entered without protection. So mother wrote to aunt Kathi, whose daughter was being educated at that particular school."

I must have made a surprised face at the mention of the dancer's daughter, for Miss Mitzi added :

"Yes! the Archduke and aunt Kathi had two children, a boy and a girl, both older than I, the boy three years and the girl ten months. They were called *Franz von Heidenbrunn* and *Augusta von Heidenbrunn.* Their mother was *Frau von Heidenbrunn,* and their father was supposed to be a *Graf von Heidenbrunn.*

"I went to that school and made friends with Augusta. We soon became inseparable; nor did my father then object to our frequenting each other. By and by both families became acquainted, and father felt greatly pleased that an Archduke, although only under the incognito mask of a Count, should climb up into his modest apartment of the Karlsgasse. They—the Archduke and my father—became even friendly enough to collaborate in a ballet—it was called *Fata Morgana*—and I suspect that my aunt Kathi had a finger in the pie. However, what was bound to happen occurred when that ballet was performed. Up to that time my father had remained unaware of the relationship that existed between the two sisters. But on that particular evening somebody congratulated my father on having so influential a brother-in-law... and, of course, the fat was in the fire.

"It is impossible to imagine my father's anger. That he should have been cheated, he, by his wife, in his own home! He forbade his door to my poor aunt and to her children, and if he did not act in the same way with the Archduke it was only because

he had not the courage to do so. Yet the result was the same: the Archduke, too, ceased to visit us. And all our nice intercourse was over, save for Augusta and me, who remained friendly and became probably even friendlier than we had been before.

"Three years ago aunt Kathi died, and her children left Vienna for Salzburg..."

"Ah!" said I.

I leave to you to interpret this "Ah!" as it pleases you. Was it expressing my pleasure of finding my way through her story, or my sorrow at the discovery of who and what the pretty officer in Salzburg was?

"A little over a year ago," went on Miss Mitzi, "my mother followed her sister. On her death-bed she asked father to reconcile himself with the Archduke and his children. But he did not yield to her prayer, although I believe that he loved her dearly. The Archduke on his side made a step towards peace and proposed to father another collaboration. They are writing another ballet together, which they call *Griseldis*. Still, my father persists in not allowing me to see Augusta. He says that as a daughter of an Archduke she is too high-born for me, and

as a daughter of La Carina too low."

"I see," I exclaimed, "I see what you were doing in Salzburg."

She looked at me wistfully, as if to say that a mere man would always be short-sighted.

"Not only was I separated from my dearest friend, but I was not allowed to frequent anybody belonging to the theatrical world. And if I am taking singing lessons it is on the understanding that I will never become a professional singer."

"How cruel!"

"Yes, cruel," repeated the dear girl, and the brims of her eyelids became very pink as though she were going to have a cry. If I had dared I would have taken her into my arms and would have told her... I knew not what. One has to be rather experienced to know what to tell to a sweet creature who opens her heart, her sorrowful heart to you.

"Now," she went on, "among the people who think that I have some talent and could make a successful operatic singer, there is a theatrical agent, Mr. Maurus Giulay."

"I know him," I cried, "a fat Hungar-

ian with diamonds on his fingers and..."

"Oh, yes!" said Miss Mitzi eagerly, "is he not a charming man? So full of wit, and so kind, and such a business man!"

The reader will do well to compare this appreciation of Mr. Giulay by Miss Doblana with my own, as reported in chapter three, and to judge whether I was right in having taken an immediate dislike to him.

"Mr. Giulay," continued Miss Mitzi, and I am sure that her eyes shone while she was speaking, "Mr. Giulay says I have a great talent not only as a singer but also as an actress."

And she added in a low voice, as though she were telling me a secret:

"He has seen me act."

She remained for one moment as in a dream, and then went on:

"Of course I am not supposed to know him at all. Now, on that Sunday morning when you saw me first, father was playing a concerto at Prague. The rehearsals were on the evenings of the Friday and Saturday before. So on the Friday morning he left for Prague. I accompanied him to the railway station to show him off. He did not

know that he was leaving me alone in charge of the house; for Fanny had begged of me to let her go and see her dying mother. Each time she wants to see her young man her mother becomes gravely ill; and although I am well aware that her mother died a good many years ago I let Fanny depart, because otherwise she becomes intolerable. I was therefore quite alone, and, you may believe me, I did not enjoy it. A little singing, a little cooking, a little reading, and a good lot of being wearied, that was how nearly the whole day passed. But late in the afternoon something happened. A wire came. A wire for me. It came from Salzburg and ran thus:

'Splendid opportunity for you, meet me to-morrow evening six at Salzburg station. Giulay.'

"I had no money. It is one of father's peculiarities to leave me with as little money as possible. What do you think I did? I went out and pawned my ring. A nice ring my mother had given me. I am ashamed to tell you how little they gave me for it. It was not even enough for a return ticket; but never mind, Augusta would lend me my

return fare. I was not going to Salzburg without seeing her."

"I passed the night in an undescribable state of excitement, and on the Saturday morning I went to the Western Station, took my ticket and departed. Now, imagine my feelings when on my arrival at Salzburg there was no Giulay!"

She made a pause. Probably she expected me to express my surprise; but I did not. I kept silent. If I had said anything it would have been to tell her that I was not astonished. I knew that I did not like him. But how to signify such an opinion to a girl who had just told me that she found him charming?

"I waited an hour, I waited two hours, and no Giulay came. So I went to my friends, where I passed the night, and the next day I returned home half angry and puzzled, and half amused at my childish eagerness. Surely Giulay would give me an explanation. Yet this explanation I never received for the same reason that prevented me from seeing you: I am locked up."

"But why?" I asked.

"That, my friend," (how sweet of her

to call me friend!) "I don't know, and I want you to find out."

"But your father must have given you a reason."

"He has not."

"He is probably angry for your having gone to Salzburg."

"He does not know it."

"How is that?"

"When I came home, just in time, Fanny had arrived and was, of course, in great anxiety about me. I told her all, and I am sure that she has not betrayed me. A quarter of an hour later my father arrived. He had had a splendid success and seemed very happy. He kissed me and was absolutely as usual. We had some supper and I went to bed. Tired as I was I fell asleep at once. But after an hour or so father came into my room, pale and with distorted features.

"Mitzi," he called with a voice which I scarcely recognized. "Who called upon you during my absence?"

"I told him that nobody did. But he made a fearful scene, insisting that he knew all, while he evidently knew nothing, and

that I would be confined to my room until I had told him the truth. And since that day I am here, and every morning he comes and asks me:

"'Will you confess?'

"And I really do not know what has happened, nor what he wants from me."

* * * *

"P. C.," calls Guncotton. (I wonder whether that has any meaning in Chemistry.) "Here's a letter from Sergeant Young for you."

This is what Charlie writes:

"My nose is broken, but I don't care. Your humble servant has the honour of being mentioned in dispatches. I once had a brother called Friedrich Wilhelm. He was mentioned in dispatches during the Boer War and soon afterwards obtained his commission.

"Yours,

"CHARLIE."

There was never such faith as brave Sergeant Young's.

V.

I HAVE already had an opportunity of telling you that I had been brought up chiefly on detective stories. I therefore thought that there would be but little difficulty in solving the case of Miss Doblana. In a nutshell this case was as follows: She was sure that nobody had called, while her father seemed certain to the contrary. How did he know it? He did not say. The mysterious visitor had left no card, otherwise either Mitzi or Fanny would have found it when they arrived, which was some time before Mr. Doblana's return. Besides, a card generally bears a name, and the horn-player's question to his daughter had been: "Who called upon you during my absence?" which proved that he only knew, or thought he knew, that somebody had called, but did not know who the somebody was.

We rang for Fanny. Had Mr. Doblana

asked her anything in connexion with the affair?

"Yes," she said, "on the Monday morning he asked me who had called during his absence, and I said: 'Nobody.'"

Thereupon Miss Doblana wanted to know, why Fanny had not said the truth, namely, that she did not know.

"He was very cross," answered the girl, "and I thought that perhaps somebody did call, and that *Fräulein* did not wish Mr. Doblana to know."

"You have a good opinion of me, Fanny. However, what did he do when you said that nobody had called?"

"He did not do anything. He swore. He said that I was in the plot, and that we were both deceiving him."

"In the circumstances you could have told him that you were absent all the time."

"And what would have been the good of it? He would have thought that *Fräulein* had removed me intentionally."

I recognized that Fanny had quite a lot of common sense. So did Mitzi, for an extraordinary thing took place: She asked Fanny for advice.—Think of a young English

lady asking for the advice of a general, or even of a between-maid.

Fanny declared that above all *Fräulein* must recover her freedom.

"But how?" cried Mitzi and I *unisono*.

Fanny looked at us and seemed to pity us for the evident helplessness of our brains.

"The young gentleman" (that was I), "will go in an hour's time to the opera. The rehearsal will be over, he will by chance meet Mr. Doblana leaving the theatre, and they will walk home together. In the meantime *Fräulein* will have dressed and will go out, and she will, by chance, too, meet the two gentlemen in the street."

"But," interfered Mitzi, "he will make a fearful row!"

"In the street?" said Fanny. "No fear. An Imperial and Royal Member of the Court Chapel will make no row in the street. He will present you to each other, and the young gentleman" (that was, of course, again I), "will enquire into *Fräulein's* health, and *Fräulein* will answer that she is now quite well, and she will never more be locked up."

What a shame that such brains are

wasted on servant girls! And the Editor of the *Evening News* when he reads this page will say: What luck that a certain Government did not know that Fanny! A special department would have been created for her: she would be appointed President of the Board of Intelligence.

Up to this day I wonder how she knew all about Mitzi's journey to Salzburg and about the Giulay wire. Her young mistress when talking to her had given her no details, yet she knew. She knew and even thought it desirable that *Fräulein* should communicate with Mr. Giulay, call upon him and ask him about that telegram.

"I know," she added, "that it is a month since he last left Vienna, even for half-a-day."

"How did you learn this?" asked Mitzi.

"But," said Fanny with just a flavour of contempt, "I wanted to know. So I made friends with his mother's cook."

I was overwhelmed. Fanny was revealing herself as a really superior being. You may therefore believe me that it was almost with reverence that I received her instructions.

"The young gentleman," she said, "will do well in getting on familiar terms with Mr. Doblana, for we must know what prevents him from being more explicit. If the young gentleman could win his confidence, we might learn what happened in that hour between his return home and his declaration to *Fräulein* that somebody must have visited her. Something must have led him to that wrong conclusion. And the young gentleman could find out not only what it was, but also why Mr. Doblana is so vague."

"And how am I to win his confidence?"

Fanny scratched herself. For the first time she appeared a little perplexed. But the scratching soon helped.

"I know a way," she declared, "but it will be terrible. The young gentleman must learn to play the horn."

Statesmen are merciless.

Now, if you are a reader of the *Evening News* you know that Statesmen have often ideas of a dazzling appearance, but which, all things considered, prove rather unsubstantial. They work all right, yet the results are slight. They seem very clever ideas, but somehow they do not reach the

main point of the question. I am sorry to state that Fanny in this respect as in other ways was worthy of her fellow statesmen and that, brilliant as was the appearance of her bits of advice, and workable as they were, they led to no definite result. And so the reader need not fear that the solution of the case of Miss Doblana will be reached before the last chapters.

Yet, the outer reconciliation between the horny father and his daughter took place that same day in exactly the same form as Fanny had foreseen it, and Mitzi recovered her liberty. Henceforth she had again the freedom of her movements, and I the pleasure of seeing her unconstrainedly. But that did not bring her one step nearer to the knowledge of what her father was reproaching her with. His was an obstinate silence. She asked him why he suspected her of having received any visitor during his absence, and he answered sternly:

"You know, and you had better tell me who it was."

And that was all.

The next day she went to see Giulay; but she came home greatly disappointed. He

swore on his oath that he had not sent the Salzburg telegram, that he had not left Vienna, and that there had been no splendid opportunity whatever which could have induced him to send that wire.

"Either Giulay lies," explained I to Mitzi, when she had finished telling me this story, "or this wire is the keystone of the whole mystery."

"I am sure," was her answer, "that Giulay not only speaks the truth, but also that he is incapable of telling any lies."

Holy Moses! An agent, especially a theatrical one, was here considered trustworthy. Well, perhaps my doubt was unjust—perhaps we had only arrived at that chapter which is commonly entitled: "The Mystery thickens," and without which no detective story would sell.

"If Giulay speaks the truth," I went on, "then it is obvious that somebody else sent that wire, somebody who was well acquainted with the fact that this particular wire would make you undertake the journey to Salzburg. Who can this person be? What can his aim have been? Why especially to Salzburg?"

"Do you mean to say that it was my cousin Augusta who sent it?"

"The suggestion is yours."

"It is impossible. Firstly, had she had something particular to tell me, I would have come quite as well if she had called me signing the wire by her own name instead of by Giulay's. And secondly, even in case of her fearing that my father would have objected to my journey to her, and if she had wanted to hide from him the reason of my travelling to Salzburg, she would have been at the station to meet me on my arrival, instead of letting me wait there for a couple of hours, and would have informed me of the truth. But she was genuinely surprised when she saw me, and, pleased as she was to pass a few hours with me, there was not the slightest reason why she should have called me to Salzburg."

I did not dare to tell her that to judge from Mr. Doblana's behaviour something serious must have happened, and that in my opinion Augusta von Heidenbrunn was not free from suspicion. People somtimes think very badly of their friends, yet they do not allow others to express these thoughts. So I kept silent on the point.

Sagacious Fanny was again consulted.

"*Fräulein* ought to write to the *Herr* Lieutenant" (that was Franz von Heidenbrunn's rank). "Men can do more than women in such cases. And ask him to find out who sent that wire. Then we shall know all."

Once more the advice seemed good, and Mitzi followed it. The Lieutenant's answer came by return; he would try, and he felt pretty sure that he would succeed. After a week or so, however, there came another letter saying that he had failed. He had found the telegraph office from which the telegram had been dispatched, but the name of the sender was unknown, and the official to whom it had been handed was unable even to remember whether the sender had been a man or a woman. So we were no wiser than before.

In the meantime I had followed Fanny's third suggestion, namely, to make friends with my host by taking lessons.

M'yes!

What the people who lived underneath and above us must have thought of my first trials on the horn I do not know, nor have I any wish to know it. I dare say my trials

were a trial to them.

There is a little tune which every Englishman knows, for it serves to call dogs with, when they are on tour in the streets. That tune is the theme which young Siegfried carols rejoicing in the forest; at least, he is supposed to do it; in reality it is the first horn-player placed in the wings of the theatre. The horn there illustrates rapturous vital power. You ought to have heard me and my vital power—or no! no! You are a kind person, you have bought this book, or at least, you have borrowed it from your Circulating Library, anyhow, you are reading it; you are a friend, and there is no reason for my wishing you evil, not even retrospectively. Nobody can in the least imagine what I achieved on the horn. At first I could not utter a sound at all, but then, when I succeeded!... How the dogs of Belsize Park would have been jealous had they heard my barking. And I carolled, not as if I had been young Siegfried, but a young dragon, nay! an old one!

That second-hand genius of modern German music (second-hand down to his very name, for the first owner of it was the great

Johann Strauss), well, Richard Strauss once said that if he had been Bizet (which, Heaven be thanked he was not), one would have heard in the last act of *Carmen* the bellowing of the bull counterpointed against the celebrated duo between Carmen and Don José. I do not know whether he ever wrote that part for the bull—but with my real talent I was able after three lessons to play it. I am sorry that Richard did not hear me, it was delightfully terrible.

* * * *

There are strange coincidences. As I sit there, sucking my pencil (my Turkish fountain pen having disappeared) and remembering my first attempts at playing the horn and, later, at writing for it, something strikes my ear. A father (at least a decent one) always recognizes his children, and if I was no great composer, I may at least say that I was a decent one. What I hear is music, played by a military band. And what do they play? What, if it is not my own paraphrase on the "Pibroch o' Donuil Dhu"? Yes, there is a military band somewhere in the rear, and what the horns

attack is the theme of "Pibroch o' Donuil Dhu" set as Doblana had told me to do it.

You ask me, ignorant reader, what that "Pibroch o' Donuil Dhu" is. The oldest military march ever composed in these foggy islands of Great Britain, at a time when—at a time—well, earlier than that. It is a Scotch tune, fierce and proud, the right thing to be thought of in our fierce and proud time. I scored an arrangement of it as an entr'acte when I was writing my opera *Lady Macbeth*. But I must not anticipate. How I came to write *Lady Macbeth* (not *Macbeth*, as you will notice, but *Lady Macbeth*) that I will tell in due time.

For the present I listen and remember. That Scotch march, that weird melody, calls back to my memory all the days of Vienna, all the story which I am busy writing.

And while they play, I hum the words Sir Walter Scott wrote of the old tune :

Pibroch o' Donuil Dhu,
Pibroch o' Donuil,
Wake thy wild voice anew,
Summon clan Conuil.
Come away, come away,
Hark to the summons,
Come in your war array,
Gentles and commons !

Come from deep glen and from mountain so rocky,
Warpipe and pennon are at Inverlochy.
Come ev'ry hill-plaid and true heart that wears one,
Come ev'ry steel blade and strong hand that bears one.

Leave untended the herd
And the flock without shelter,
The corpse uninterr'd
And the bride at the altar.
Leave the deer, leave the steer,
Leave nets and barges,
Come in your fighting gear,
Broad swords and targes.

Come as the winds come, when forests are rended,
Come as the waves come, when navies are stranded.
Faster come, faster come, faster and faster,
Chief, vassal, page and groom, tenant and master!

Fast they come, fast they come,
See how they gather,
Wide wave the eagle plumes
Blended with heather.
Cast your plaids, draw your blades,
Forward each man set,
Pibroch o' Donuil Dhu,
Knell for the onset!

I wonder. How does it happen that they are playing my march here? I do not even remember whether I left the score in Vienna or took it with me.

Now they play other music, the overture of *Poet and Peasant,* of course, and the waltz from the *Merry Widow* and other things—

all Viennese, my God!—as if to make it still harder to me, to think that these days of Vienna, these beautiful days of mirth and sorrow, should be gone for ever, for ever!—And then, then they play the "Pibroch o' Donuil Dhu" once more, and then nothing else. Nothing. I dream, I wonder, and an hour passes.

"Post!"

This cry would awaken a dormouse, There are but three things at the front. Long stretches of boredom, short ones of fright, and post.

Two of the letters are for me, and the first one is from Dad. Just now I had been wondering at that strange performance of the "Pibroch o' Donuil Dhu." Here is the solution of the riddle.

"My lad,

"I quite understand that composing is an impossibility when one is in the firing line, and I regret having worried you. I therefore do not send you the music paper. But I have forwarded a few days ago the parts of your Scottish march to your

regimental bandmaster. You see, I want one of your marches to be played when you are going on towards victory. And as you can't compose another one, it may as well be the "Pibroch." Before I sent the parts I had the music played to me. It was only a band of the Salvation Army, I could not get hold of anything else. We went there to hear it, your mother and I and Bean, who was just staying in London. My word, it was beautiful, and it reminded me of the olden days. If only I could once more hear the whole opera. Mother looked very proud and dignified, Bean wept, but wept like a fountain, and I... well, I had it performed three times. I gave the bandmaster a cheque for ten guineas. At first he did not want to accept it; he said it had been a pleasure to play such beautiful music, and apologized for the two little mistakes that had been made..."

(Happy man! He had heard only two!)

"... And then he pocketed the cheque all the same. Mother sends you hearty kisses. So do I.

"DANIEL COOPER."

Dad! Good Dad! There isn't a Dad like you in all the world.

The other letter is from Bean. It is quite short.

"Dear Pat" (it runs), "I have just heard your beautiful music. I am quite overcome. With such sounds striking our soldiers' ears, how can they march to anything else than Victory? I feel that I must do something, too. My heart drives me forth.

"The girl you left behind you,

"BEAN."

And Bean, there isn't a Bean like you in all the world, either.

* * * *

I have lost a whole day, remembering and musing. This would have been rather bad if this book were written to an order from a publisher. For one reason or another publishers are always in a hurry. But then they belong to the higher orders of animals. A simple *Tommyius subterraneus* has plenty of time.

Yet perhaps you have not. Therefore I hasten to return to the nice sounds I used to extract out of an unhappy horn. It is intentionally that I used the word "extract," which will remind you of a toothache. So did my blowing the horn. It was pitiful, yet heroic. For, in truth, I had no wish to make a living out of these horny studies. It was all for the sake of the charming Mitzi. Had I but been in possession of her fleshy lips!

I notice that this last sentence has a double sense. On the one hand it means that I have thin lips and therefore enjoyed great difficulties in producing any sounds on the horn. But on the other hand that sentence also informs you of my ardent desire to call Mitzi's red lips my own. I had fallen in love with her from the first day, from the very moment when in the railway carriage I had been attracted by the handsome contours of... of... of the reverse of the medal. I had now arrived at that state when the very name Mitzi would strike my brain with a glowing emotion, when I liked to forget all other things and to occupy myself solely with her, remembering the

evenness of the outline of her figure, her feminine daintiness, her slim, narrow feet. Yet, I had no experience of women, my feelings were intense, but my thoughts were vague, my love was a formless abstraction, and Mitzi a perceptible fact. In truth, I did not know that I was in love, and some time had to pass before I realized it.

In the meantime I used my breath in blowing the horn. Nevertheless I did not gain Mr. Doblana's confidence. His intercourse with his daughter seemed to be restricted to the utmost necessary, and I was unable to find out with what offence he was reproaching her. Still, if I did not learn his secret—for it was evidently a secret—I had occasion to study his character.

After about a dozen lessons he allowed that I was hopeless as a horn-player. He strongly advised me to give it up. But having once tasted my money (or, to render unto Cæsar the things that were Cæsar's, the money of Daniel Cooper & Co., Ltd., Insurance Brokers, London, E.C.), and having found it savoury and palatable, he decided on having another helping of it.

"Mr. Co-oper," he said—he always

pronounced my name with a hyphen between the two o's, associating it probably by some mysterious etymology with the origin of Co-operative societies—"Mr. Co-oper, you have talent only as a composer; but I am afraid that you will profit very little by the lessons you take with Hammer. He is a genius and, poor devil, I do not grudge him the little money you will let him earn; however, I venture to say that you would benefit more by studying with a more practical man like me. Of course, it could not be the same figure..."

Now, as he did not know what I was paying Hammer, these last words could only refer to his own lessons, the famous attempts at teaching me the horn, and this was already twice the cost of Hammer's lessons. But it was true that I improved little with the organist's loose and obscure explanations which, indeed, were more fascinating than serviceable; and I was only too glad to be relieved from the torture I inflicted upon myself and the neighbourhood. Besides, had I not the duty, as it were, of cultivating my friendship with Mr. Doblana?

So I accepted, and had Viennese lessons

in the noble art of composition, from a Czech, at London terms. Nor had I to regret my decision, for Mr. Doblana proved a most invaluable teacher. I have already stated that I owe to him all I know, little as it may be.

I was not only his pupil, but his apprentice, which is the best, the surest way of learning, for it necessitates a continuous connexion between the master and the disciple.

Mr. Doblana was now composing a new ballet called *Aladdin,* and many pages of this work were scored out by me from his sketches.

Now, if the reader will be good enough to peruse again the fourth chapter of this book, he will find that Mitzi had informed me that her father was working on a ballet called *Griseldis,* the book of words of which—if I may use the euphemism "book of words"—had been provided by the Archduke Alphons Hector, or the *Herr Graf,* whichever name you may prefer for this exalted person. The book of *Aladdin,* too, was signed Joseph Dorff, the Archduke's nom de plume.

As I was training myself not only as a composer but also as a detective, I thought that this inconsistency might have its importance, and I submitted it to the joint council of Mitzi and Fanny. Mitzi only abandoned herself to grief. In former days she would have known all about it, while now her father treated her with such indifference! But Fanny declared the incident of no importance: The first ballet "Fa*ther* Morgana" had also had another name at the beginning.

"Yes," said Mitzi, "it was at first called *Daphnis and Chloe.*"

"How is that possible?" asked I. "The two subjects seem absolutely different—as different as *Griseldis* and *Aladdin.*"

"Oh!" declared Mitzi lightly, "that does not matter with ballet. The same music can always serve for the most dissimilar objects. When father altered *Daphnis and Chloe* into *Fata Morgana* he said he had only to add some fifths to the bass, and some strange drums and tambourins in order to change his music from occidental to oriental."

This seemed to me very deep and

probably true. So the incident was dismissed. Yet I had never been nearer a clue! I ought at least to have noticed that Mr. Doblana was not merely adapting a musical dress from its occidental fashion to an oriental one, but that, musically speaking, he was making up his *balletis personæ* in real old carpets from Baghdad or some other such place.

One evening—he and I used to pass his free evenings together—we went to a tavern called the "Tobacco Pipe," one of those places which a London innkeeper would not fail to denominate "Ye olde..." The whole of the Round Table used to meet there once a month in a nice smoky back-room. It was a large room, which from its dimensions seemed lower than it really was. It was panelled in old dark oak, and on the ceiling heavy black joists were visible. The tables, which no table-cloth adorned, were made of old oak, as were the chairs and the rest of the furniture. Old fashioned oil lamps fixed on the joists succeeded in giving the whole locality a kind of pleasant homeliness, although these oil lamps were lit by electricity. I was told that this room was several

hundred years old, and that the new modern house had been built around it. That room was in great demand by all sorts of societies, and it was not possible for it to be hired by one body oftener than for one evening a month, because decisions in any trade or profession had to be taken at "The Tobacco Pipe" if fashion was to be satisfied.

That day the programme of the Round Table was to find some means of defence against the growing invasion of amateurs in the theatrical and especially the musical profession. All the people I knew were there and, of course, many more.

Poor Hammer, who was the senior of the company, made the first speech. He began all right, talking of art for art's sake, but soon lost the subject and, before anybody knew how it had happened, was explaining the fundamental difference between mediæval and modern counterpoint. By unanimous consent he was deprived of the power of going on with his speech, and, greatly astonished, sat down.

The *Herr Graf* said, that being himself a sort of an amateur he was defending their cause. He quite understood that hopeless

cases should be prevented from producing their work in public, but such rule could not be applied to all. Had not Wagner been called an amateur? The only way out was the creation of a special tribunal for such disputes.

An elderly gentleman who stammered told the assembly that if Wagner had been suppressed it would not have been a shame. He was hissed into silence, and Mr. Bischoff declared that such words were Anti-German, that to attack Wagnerism was to attack Germanism, that Wagner's object had been the freeing of opera from its traditional and conventional Franco-Italian forms, and his one law: dramatic fitness.

Thereupon another speaker arose. He was a medical man by profession, and his name was Doctor Bernheim. He declared that the subject of Germanism was quite out of place, and that the right way of tackling the question had been indicated by Mr. Hammer.

Immediately the old man got up, bowed in an awkward way and offered his snuff box to the Doctor, who went on: Certainly, there were two different classes of artists. There

was art for art's sake, music which had only that one aim of being beautiful, and in this he included art for technique's sake. The other class was art for the expression of an idea, in his opinion the higher form of art, though he admitted that his opinion mattered very little. Only these two classes of artists counted at all, and it was the public's, not the artist's, duty to decide who could be ranged in the one or the other category, and who was not to be counted in either of them. The struggle against amateurs had to be fought not by the institution of a tribunal, but by the production of work either so skilled or so highly inspired that no amateur could compete.

Doctor Bernheim seemed to have won the day when Mr. Doblana chose to take part in the discussion. In his opinion the Doctor had made a mistake by including art for technique's sake into art for art's sake. Technique could be taught, and learning alone had nothing common with art. He, Doblana, knew composers for the brain and composers for the heart; only the latter were artists by the grace of God, the only ones he admitted. The public could not decide who

deserved this qualification. But the one fact, that a composer was capable of inventing new melodies, real melodies, would entitle him to being called an artist.

I did not like Doblana's view of the question, yet I would have given anything to spare him the answer.

It was Giulay, of all people, Maurus Giulay, who stood up and attacked the horn-player.

"Everybody," he said, "knows that Mr. Doblana is a good business man. In fact, there is no other musician of such money grubbing habits in the whole town of Vienna. He knows that tunes, little tunes, pay. There is but one excuse for Mr. Doblana's petty point of view: his nationality. He is a Czech, and as such devoid from all sorts of ideals. It is not his fault if he misunderstands the whole question. It is his nationality's!"

Doblana had become quite pale.

"What do *you* know of the question, you Magyar!" he shouted.

Instantly there was a terrific outburst of the whole company. Nobody would have suspected it a minute before. Nearly all the

members of the Round Table turned against Doblana, who was supported only by two other Czechs, three or four Italians, and one German: old Hammer. As for the *Herr Graf,* when I looked for him to see how he was behaving with his partner, I found that he had disappeared.

One cannot well imagine how fierce the outburst was. My calm English brain could not understand at all this wild talk, these furious shouts. I was shocked, I must confess, and I felt a little silly. Evidently there was no more possibility of reaching a decision this evening. So with much talk I induced Doblana to leave with me.

As it was not very late, I suggested a stroll which would appease my agitated host.

The evening was one of those of which we never see an example in our foggy island, an exquisite spring evening, rapturous and passionately wonderful. You know the evil smell which fills most big towns just at that time of the year. Vienna is not so. There is a gust of perfume which gives spring its true significance.

As we were walking down first the Boulevard, or Ring, as it is called in Vienna,

and then, after having crossed the river, the wide road which leads to the Prater, I imagined what happiness would be mine if a certain fair girl was moving by my side instead of her surly father. On the bridge there stood a lovely flower girl, delayed probably by some little mishap, with a basket full of red roses and white lilies of the valley. I would have bought some for Mitzi... Suppose I now offered a few to the horn-player...!

Was it not perfectly ridiculous to lose my sunny youth walking side by side with an old man, still smarting from what he considered an insult, and smarting all the more as there was some truth in what had been said of him?

We were hardly speaking and I could think freely of the happenings of this evening which were in a more or less close connexion with what interested me most.

Yes, it was quite true that Doblana was a money grubber. And money was the most important question in all his art... in all his life, I ought to say. He might, in this respect at least, have been an Englishman, a Londoner, a City man.

And suddenly I was struck by a thought.

Up to now my idea had been that Mr. Doblana suspected his daughter of some love affair. Had I myself not felt something like mistrust?

Yet, why did he not say so? Why, if really he was so interested in questions of money, why did he make such a fuss about a love affair?

So I jumped to the conclusion that there was in Mr. Doblana's mind no suspicion of any secret amours. What had upset him was certainly something that had to do with his money glutting.

We were now in the Prater. Never before had this immense park appeared so beautiful to me. A bench seemed to invite us with open arms to a short visit. And a bench being in that funny German language a female, we accepted. Artists are incorrigible.

As soon as we had sat down Mr. Doblana began lamenting.

"I am in bad luck," he said, "that quarrel this evening ought never to have happened. Somehow I feel that I am surrounded by enemies. There must be a whole

gang of them. I have been lured into this discussion, and now I have the whole clique of the Germans against me. You have no idea, Mr. Co-oper, what intrigues exist in the theatrical world. They are all jealous because I happen to make a little money out of my ballets. They undermine my whole existence. And I have not only a great many members of the theatrical and musical world against me, but also most of the Court circles. The majority of the Court do not like to see the Archduke Alphons Hector writing ballet books for me. They think he abases himself. They do not know that art never degrades. Of course, he can bear it easily. But I! All my existence depends on it."

"Can I not help you?" said I, thinking that there had at last arisen an occasion of capturing that confidence which for weeks I had been striving to win.

He remained silent. I have told you already that I had little experience of women. But I must confess that at this moment I noticed that I had still less experience of men. I felt sure that, if I had been with a nice girl—I wish he had been a

nice girl instead of a morose, old man—I should have known what to say. Indeed, there are not many words necessary. But I could not profit by the moon, nor by that mild night of May, I could not possibly put my arm around his waist and press him to my manly breast...

After a long while I said at last:

"Can you not trust me, Mr. Doblana?"

"Trust you? Trust you?" he replied. "I cannot even trust my own daughter, who works with that gang against me! And I should trust you, a stranger? No, no, Mr. Co-oper."

And laughing bitterly he suggested:

"Come, let us go home."

We got up and went. I had learned nothing. I was as ignorant as before. But...

You will see in the course of this story that you never can confide in females. And a bench is a female in German. This one was as treacherous as all of them. It had made me catch a cold. Or rather...the cold had caught me.

VI.

WE have had a few days very hard fighting. It was shocking. War may be a necessary occupation, but it is scarcely a respectable one. A gentleman ought to be gentle, above all. When I enlisted I thought there would be much sport. There is very little. I also thought that it would be soothing for my sorrow. But I am still mortified, though you probably do not believe me when I assert it. And I have the feeling that after the war everything will be changed and that there will be quite another world, yet that it will not be any better. Still, I am one sheep in a herd, and I have to do as the other sheep do, namely, follow the lead of our bell-wethers, although I am sure that sheep are not born murderers.

And least we ought to have waited for Sergeant Young's recovery. He cheers us

up. He believes in it. And he fights for something: for his commission. We have felt very lonely without him. Fancy, feeling lonely in a battle.

So, having a few days' rest and having been ordered to the rear, a couple of miles or so from the firing line, we decide, three of us, Cotton, Pringle, and I, to call upon Charles Young. Right we were to do so, for he is as stimulating as a pick-me-up.

"Hallo!" he cries, as soon as he sees us, and his bandage all over the nose gives him an American accent, "that's nice of you two to call."

"Two?" asks Cotton astonished, and tries to count the three of us. "I think we are more."

"What's the use of thinking?" replies the Sergeant, "thinking is the drawback of all learned men. You are two."

"We are three."

"In theory perhaps. But your theory fights in vain against facts. I'm as sure that you are two, as I am sure of getting my commission.'"

"How is that?" ask the three of us (for we are three in spite of his denial).

"Well, the surgeon who has arranged my nose, a very clever chap by the way, promised me to use his influence with the first general who would be wounded. That can't last *very* long, can it?"

"I don't want to undeceive you," points out Cotton, "but you had better tell me why we are two and not three. If it's true I will believe in the coming of your commission."

"Right!" says Charlie. "Patrick Cooper is one P.C., and Pringle Cotton gives another P.C., therefore the three of you are two P.C's. It's as clear as a chemical formula."

"There is something in that," answers Guncotton seriously.

"Otherwise your brain is not affected?" inquires Pringle, full of anxiety.

"I am not sure," answers the Sergeant, and assumes as mysterious an air as his bandage permits. "I guess," (this in his most American nasal pronounciation), "that there is something the matter with my brain. Tell me, when the other day I tried to be lighter than air and flew up, only to show that I was heavier than air and fell on my nose, how long was I... Hun-conscious?"

"Three minutes," says Cotton.

"Four," I correct.

"Five," asserts Pringle.

"Is that all?" asks Charlie pensively. "I should have thought that it was hours from the vision I had. Vision or dream, as you may call it."

"Oh!" says Cotton, "that need not disturb you in the least. The great rapidity of dream thought has often been proved, for instance, by an experience of Lord Holland, who fell asleep when listening to his secretary reading to him, had a long dream, and yet awoke in time to hear the end of the very sentence which had lulled him to sleep and of which he remembered the beginning."

"To judge from the length of that sentence," observes Pringle, "it must have been a German book the secretary was reading."

"In my opinion," goes on Cotton, "the rapidity of dream thought depends on the kind of food one had last, on the amount of its several chemical constituents. Suppose you had some Methyl alcohol, $CH_3.HO$..."

"Bosh!" interrupts the disrespectful Pringle, and turns to the Sergeant. "Tell us your vision."

"Well it was thus:

"We were at a certain place, which had a certain name, which for fear of the Censor I cannot call by its real denomination, but which our boys called Mince from the amount of Germans which for many days had been chopped there into mince-meat. And remember, our men had done it this time without the help of St. George and his Agincourt Bowmen. There were thousands of dead Germans lying in front of our lines, and the enemy sent up still more men and still more guns; but the men were shattered by us and the guns battered into scrap iron.

"At last, when evening came, the thunder calmed down. If we had wanted we could have broken through, but we had no orders to advance. I suppose that our General wanted Mince to become more worthy still of its title.

"Now, you remember how the Angels of Mons had knocked over ever so many Germans. In Germany, a country ruled by scientific principles, they thought at first that we had employed an unknown gas of poisonous nature. But the *Evening News,* and in particular Mr. Arthur

Machen, gave the secret away. And then the Germans knew all about it.

"Well, to come back to that dreadful day of Mince; night had fallen and I was dozing, when I saw suddenly two men in a red uniform, with black tippets and with a red feather on their red cap. The one had a crooked moustache and the other a very high collar.

"'Father,' said the latter, 'this business does not seem to go exactly as we had calculated. What are we going to do?'

"'Little Silly,' answered the one with the crooked moustache, 'I have lost some of my prestige, but I still know what costume to put on and on what occasion. If the English have called to their help the Angels of Mons, we will answer with a new frightfulness. You see our costumes. Understand that we are going to call the Devils of Mince.'

"'*Some* frightfulness!!' said little Silly acquiescently.

"'Hither Beelzebub! Hither! Dear devil, quick to our aid!' cried the one with the crooked moustache.

"At once I heard a great voice:

"'Here I am, Monseigneur, Allhighest Superdevil, here I am, Satan!'

"And a little man with sharp eyes and a big walking stick, but otherwise dressed like the two others in red and black, appeared. I need not give you a further description, as you may read it in Macaulay's essay on Frederick the Great.

"The one with the crooked moustache said at once:

"'Great Grandfather, I have called you to succour us. Come now and aid us.'

"Thereupon Beelzebub-Frederick answered:

"'Sonny, thou are the Superdevil, and although I was a greater general than thou ever wilt be, I do not dare to give thee advice, especially as I have none to give.'

"The Allhighest Superdevil shrugged his Imperial shoulders and called again:

"'Hither, Mephistopheles! Hither! Come and grant us good deliverance.'

"And another devil appeared, an insignificant looking one. But he answered:

"'Monseigneur, as true as my name on earth was Treitschke, I am good only at writing about frightfulness; but I am not a practical devil.'

"Again the Superdevil called :

"'Hither, Asmodeus! Hither! Sweet devil, high chevalier, defend us!'

"This time there came a very big one, bulky and fat, unable to hide all his baldness under his red feathered cap.

"'Monseigneur,' he said sweetly, 'I would willingly have concocted a new Ems telegram for you; but when you ascended your Satanic throne your first move was to send me to hell, where I am still dwelling. Bismarck refuses to help you!'

"The Allhighest Superdevil called many more—with no result however. Nietzsche's excuse was that he had become mad. Moltke declared that, having been a silent man during all his earthly life, he did not want to talk now that he was living in hell. And thus each of them had an excuse.

"At last little Silly whispered something in the ear of his Satanic Majesty.

"'This time you are right, my boy,' replied the one with the crooked moustache, 'receive my Imperial thanks. I will give you a supplementary Iron Cross of real gold, if there is any left. May our old God bless you.'

"Then, once more, he cried:

"'Well then, sweet devil, Messire, Wicked one, Hostile one, Strong one, thou real Tempter, quick, quick to our aid!'

"Deep bells began to ring, and yet another devil appeared. He was very small with a big head and wore a sailor's beard under his chin. He had no red-feathered cap on his head like the other devils, but a soft velvet toque.

"'You have not treated me as I deserved,' he said solemnly. 'I had made so much fuss about my works that four-fifths of the world mistook me for a real composer. You have made of my sublime music dramas a means of propaganda, of Pan-German propaganda. And you have done worse. You have accepted that rubbish by Richard Strauss as equal to my own immortal work. Some call him Richard the Second, and some Strauss the Second; Second he may be, but never First. And you have abandoned my poor family when you refused to prolong the Copyright of my works, my poor wife who had been so heroically unfaithful to her husband for my sake, my poor son who in spite of my un-

deniable paternity has not the slightest musical talent. And further, you have allowed my *Parsifal* to be played everywhere, against my wish, and so revealed to the world its real value. Still, I will help you and show you at once the strength of my *Parsifal* and the real frightfulness, the one, the only one which will frighten the English.'

"Four young knights of Hell approached him carrying a glass jar. It was not filled with blood as you may believe, not with the holy blood of the Grail, but with the purest strawberry jam.

"'Uncover the jam!' said Wagner, acting the last scene of *Parsifal* and not noticing that the glass jar was not covered. He began to pray; little round rubies seemed to shine in the jam. And all the devils cried:

"'Oh marvel! Marvel of the highest frightfulness!'

"Then, as in *Parsifal* the white dove, a black crow this time descended and remained soaring above Wagner's head, who exclaimed triumphantly:

"'Hurrah! Hurrah! Monseigneur! All

the strawberry jam of England is changed into plum jam—plum jam with stones to prove what it is!'

"I fainted. Then somebody threw water on my face, and I woke again."

"You must have had too much bacon for breakfast," says Cotton, "to judge from the rapidity of your dream. The chemical composition..."

"Rubbish!" interrupts Pringle, "but you will remember, Sergeant, that we were talking of *Parsifal* just before the action began."

And I add:

"Sergeant, I have every respect for you, but I must say, you have given your Wagner-Devil one of my favourite ideas to talk on, and I put it to you that you have stolen it from me."

"Don't use strong language."

"All right, Sergeant, but that cackle about Richard II. and Strauss II. is my intellectual copyright."

* * * * *

When I was a tiny boy, the mater used to tell me the story of a shepherd who came,

with his thousand sheep, to a bridge so narrow that only one sheep at a time could cross the brook which it spanned. "And now, little Pat," she would say, "you must wait until all the thousand sheep have passed, and in the meantime you may go and play with your ball."

Now, Mr. Reader, you believe yourself mighty clever because you think: Ha, ha! That's the trick he has employed, and while he told us Charlie Young's dream yarn, he may himself have got rid of his cold. Well, you are mistaken. It is not a trick, and the intermezzo of the preceding pages has its importance. Nor will you be spared to undergo the story of my cold, and the only thing I can do for you is to wish you that it may not prove contagious.

It was a bad cold.

Now, a cold where you merely weep and sneeze and sniff and blow your nose which by degrees becomes somewhat like a burning Zeppelin—by the way, if you never have seen a burning Zeppelin, I take this opportunity to inform you that it is, of course, like the splendid, brilliant, luminous, glaring nose of one who has such a cold—such a cold may

be *called* a bad cold, but it *is* not. It is a coryza. It is a cold in the head, an unimportant part of the human body when the point in question is a cold. With such a cold you are only more or less ridiculous.

But when you begin coughing and spitting, and when high fever sets in, when you think that you would not like to die yet, especially from pneumonia, and when your Mr. Doblana recognizes with real regret that he must interrupt the lessons and will be unable to charge you for the time lost; when the doctor must be called, and when after a fortnight you begin to recover but still feel weaker than a child, then you have a bad cold, one of these perfidious colds you catch in May.

However, if you possess one of those sunny natures such as I pride myself of having, if you know how to find roses among thorns, if you can remember that old Jew who used to say whenever he could: "*Gamsoo l'towvo,*" which means: "This too leads to the best"—you see, being on the classical side I was taught Hebrew in the Special Class and never forgot that sentence—then, m'dear, you will only remember

that this bad cold was very nice, inasmuch as it brought you nearer to your beloved Mitzi. You will ever recollect that sweet contact which will have made of your nasty illness a time of continuous joy.

I felt as if I had only begun to live since I was ill, and I was sure that she also experienced for the first time a great, primitive emotion, and that to her nothing else was worth thinking of. She was taking care of me and seemed made quite glorious by this obligation imposed on her. And yet we did not speak, we were awed, all words seemed futile.

The medical man who attended to me was Doctor Bernheim, the same whose acquaintance I had made at the Tobacco Pipe. He was a very intelligent fellow, and we sympathized as much as such a thing is possible between two individuals of thirty years' difference of age. He was a man interested in politics as well as in art, and, what is more remarkable, he was nevertheless a good doctor.

One day I told him how thoroughly incomprehensible the quarrel between Doblana and the other members of the

Round Table had seemed to me. This was the beginning of a series of conversations, during which Doctor Bernheim first explained me the complicated question of Austrian nationalities, the struggle between the different races.

There was, above all, the continual strife for superiority between the Western (Austrian) and the Eastern (Hungarian) half of the Monarchy. Then there were in both parts internal contests, for neither was the population of Austria entirely German, nor that of Hungary entirely Magyar. In both halves of the country a large percentage of Slavs was to be found, among which the rising Czech people, both intellectual and industrial, could not be neglected. Of late years German influence had become observable, and there was now in Austria a distinct Pan-Germanic tendency. A tacit understanding existed between the German and Hungarian population, whose purpose was the suppression of all Czech aspirations.

Then there was a Polish question, the Galician Poles demanding to be united with the Russian and German Poles into one Kingdom,—an Italian question, Trieste and

Gorizia as well as the Trentino wishing to be incorporated into Italy,—a Rumanian, a Ruthenian, a Serbian question.

Nor was that all. A violent Anti-Semitic movement had been originated by the clerical party, which was jealous of the ever brisk business capacity of the numerous Jews—of which the Doctor himself was one.

In one word, there was everywhere contrariety and quarrelling, dissension and discord.

Mitzi, who sometimes was present at our discussions, was very intransigent. She had an inborn hatred for all what was German and Hungarian, although German was her mother tongue. In her heart she was a Czech. Of modern music she loved only Italian, French, and Czech, but she loathed the modern Germans for their utter lack of feeling. On this point as on so many others there was complete agreement between her and me. I had myself observed that the unrivalled reputation of Vienna as *the* musical city *par excellence* was upheld above all by Italian and Slav musicians. The Germans, although they made much ado about themselves, played an

inferior, if a not altogether, secondary part.

I suppose I had a good time. Most people know the course of events, when by degrees an agreement of affections is changed into... tenderness. So I dare say you can do without my description.

But one day something happened. It was quite an insignificant incident, yet it is one which I cannot forget. Simply it was that Mitzi sang to me. It was the fourth or fifth day since I had been allowed to leave my bed. I had never heard her except for a few exercises.

Her voice is not a very strong one, but there was never one as warm nor as expressive. It went at once into my heart, as Mitzi herself that day went into my life. What she sang mattered little, short folk-songs, I believe, quite simple, yet her voice has that incomparable faculty of changing all what she sings into purest gold, as Midas did to all he touched.

Yes, it was rather an insignificant, little incident. Nor was there any revolution in me. No, but an evolution began. Slowly, vaguely, feelings came to me. Feelings, not thoughts. They were all inside my breast

and—my word—they did hurt. Mitzi had with her singing struck a chord of gold, which was vibrating in my heart.

"*Fräulein* Mitzi," said I, for I had not yet learned to call her by her name alone; "if you will help me a little, and encourage me, I will write an opera for you. There is something exceedingly tender and impressive in your voice, something childlike... I am sure you will inspire me, you will be my Muse."

Possibly you imagine that she was flattered, or at least pleased. Nothing of the sort, my dear. She just looked doubtful. She ought to have begun at once with the encouragement business I had suggested. A little phrase as, for instance, "That would be nice!" would not have cost her much. Any English girl would have said it. True, it would not have meant much, either, and she wasn't an English girl. Yet—I owe you some frankness, don't I?—I was somewhat disappointed. If I am not greatly mistaken, she turned up her nose a little when she said:

"Are you sure you will be able to write an opera?"

"For you, *Fräulein* Mitzi, I will be able to do anything!"

Indeed, such was my feeling. Yes, her very indifference was encouraging me. Such is man when he is in love. Her apathy made me suffer, and my wretchedness only stimulated me. Sure, I would show her of what I was capable. Her insensibility only augmented my emotion.

"I don't like your calling my voice childish, and if you compose something for me it will have to be heroic."

"I never said that you had a childish voice."

"You did."

"I did not. I said 'childlike.'"

"There is no great difference."

Thus our quarrelling began. And I may well say that the same hour which saw the birth of my love also germinated the origin of its end.

Ladies have many uses for their tongue. Amongst other things, they sting with it. And therefore we love them.

However, important as this may be, surely it does not interest you, to whom my philosophy is of no use. So I return to my story.

I went to Mr. Bischoff as soon as my health was a little restored. I wanted to write a music drama on *Macbeth* as he had suggested. Should he not be willing to write a libretto on the basis of those wonderful ideas he had exposed to me? I was sure that I would succeed in making with his aid a real masterpiece.

If you consider with what an important personality I had chosen to deal, you will not be surprised when hearing that it was *not* "on the basis of those wonderful ideas he had exposed to me" that Mr. Bischoff agreed to write the said libretto. He wanted the basis to be more... substantial. I need therefore hardly tell you what the next step was. And, still considering that Mr. Bischoff was the first Viennese actor, and had refused offers for mere translations from a London firm at ten shillings a thousand words, you will easily imagine which figure I asked Daniel Cooper & Co., Ltd., to put on his next cheque. But I tore my letter immediately into pieces and wrote another, asking for £50 more, I could as well bleed my poor dad of £300 as of £250, couldn't I? And the supplement would enable me to show my

intense gratitude to my charming nurse, and even to show it more than once.

I deeply regret to announce that Miss Doblana exhibited a much greater satisfaction when I offered her a beautiful fan of white ostrich feathers than when I had opened to her the perspective of my opera. She was really winsome as she thanked me, oh! so winsome. Yet, to-day, after years, I think that it was very foolish of me to make her such a gift. Most men will share this opinion, although most girls will judge it otherwise. As for Mitzi, I fear that she foresaw more gifts and decided there and then to take my opera into the bargain.

Anyhow, that fan was bought (but not paid for) and offered to the lady of my heart before the cheque arrived from London. And then something very awkward occurred. Daniel Cooper & Co., Ltd., sent me a cheque for £300, not payable to me but to Mr. Bischoff. I am sure this mischievous move was caused by mother. For while father's letter was nice and gentle as ever, and while he stated being sure that with such a librettist I would achieve something remarkable, mother wrote that in her idea it was

nonsense to attempt an opera before having well learned how to write one; and there was something between the lines that read as if she was smelling a rat.

Now, what was I going to do with my cheque for £300? I could not well go to Mr. Bischoff and ask him for change, for if I knew little of women and even less of men, I knew already a lot of the third sex, viz.: the artists. There was no probability of his being able to give me change for £50, and, candidly, I did not trust any artist sufficiently, especially not Mr. Bischoff whom I scarcely knew, to let him have the cheque as it was, and wait for the £50 change until he had cleared it. I felt like a schoolboy, comfortless and wretched, and as usual: silly.

For three days I went about absolutely miserable with my big cheque in my pocket. My state of mind could not escape Mr. Hammer who, finding a few bad mistakes in a fugue of mine, declared that this and the rest of my behaviour proved clearly that I was in love, an accident that had befallen him in former years every six weeks, so that he had a sufficient experience to pass judg-

ment on other people. Now, if even Hammer saw my uneasiness, you will understand that it was soon noticed by Mr. Doblana who, although a musician too, was far more a human being. He inquired. He insisted. For one of the results of being so human was a certain degree of curiosity.

"It must have something to do with your opera," he asserted at last. "How far have you got with it?"

"Oh!" said I, "I have not begun yet."

"Then," cried he, "why do you make such a face as if you had lost your score?"

I am sure that, when I heard this question, I looked at him in the most idiotic fashion you may imagine. And I must have looked at him for a long time, say, twenty seconds, which is much longer than most people think. Two ideas had flashed up through my brain, (or whatever you may call it).

The second—which was probably the result of the excitement caused by the first one—the second was to return the £300 cheque to my father, and to ask him for several smaller cheques which I could hand Mr. Bischoff in proportion to the work done,

a proceeding which certainly would please the mater, for it proved me to be an earnest chap.

Yes. And the first idea?

I simply discovered the mystery which Mr. Doblana was hiding:

He had lost the score of his ballet *Griseldis,* which he had been composing before *Aladdin.*

VII.

LIKE most modest, unassuming persons I am proud of a lot of things. Thus, without any boasting, I think I am fairly discreet. You may therefore imagine how astonished I felt when I found myself next morning in Mr. Doblana's studio, carefully rummaging his drawers in search of the manuscript of his ballet *Griseldis*. I had an excuse: I was doing detective work, and the discreet detective is a type that has still to be invented. But you may believe me: I was unceasingly blushing.

During the night I remembered a conversation which I had overheard by chance—please, *do* not forget that I am a discreet person—a conversation between Mr. Doblana and the *Herr Graf*. It had taken place the first time that I was admitted to the Round Table, and I have duly reported it in Chapter III.

(I am absolutely distressed always to be obliged to refer the reader to previous chapters. It gives this story, which otherwise would be quite pleasant, an almost scientific appearance. But my unbounded inexperience in the art of writing must be taken into account.)

This conversation then had mentioned the loss of one of Mr. Doblana's works. The name of the work was not stated, nor how it had been lost. A musical work may be lost otherwise than by the actual disappearance or destruction of its manuscript. A hostile report may mean its definite ruin. But once the idea had struck me that Mr. Doblana's strange calamity was indeed the loss of his manuscript, the recollection of that colloquy with the *Herr Graf* strengthened my opinion. So I tried to make sure whether *Griseldis* really had disappeared.

After I had made an hour's careful search, and inspected every paper, leaf by leaf, without finding the slightest trace of the manuscript, I decided that I was right. I further concluded that the horn-player was convinced of its having been stolen, and this

with the help of his own daughter.

As it had a considerable monetary value, he must have been very sore about the disappearance of his work. The simplest thing would of course have been to communicate with the police. But tied to a collaborator of so high a position as the *Herr Graf* he could not well take such a step without consulting him. Clearly Doblana had not obtained his support, a prominent member of the Court having probably no desire for any business with the police. Thus the matter was at an end for my poor host. He had to remain quiet, and despair was his only consolation.

But I at least was not compelled to have any consideration, and I wanted badly to free Mitzi from the suspicion which lay upon her. From what I knew, it was absolutely unjust. She had been lured into a journey, and her absence had been misused.

By whom?

Who was the thief?

An examining magistrate must sometimes have a very uncomfortable feeling. For, if one has a preconceived idea in such a case, it is difficult to free oneself from it.

I experienced this. In my mind Giulay was the main hinge on which the whole business turned. From the beginning I had conceived it so, and hard as I tried to get rid of this idea, it always came back to me: Giulay had sent the wire, in spite of his denial, knowing quite well that it would decide Mitzi to go to Salzburg. And Giulay did not like Mr. Doblana, as he had shown by attacking him in a tactless and violent way, without apparent reason, in the course of the evening at the Tobacco Pipe.

The great difficulty for me consisted in the impossibility of talking about the whole affair to Mitzi. I held the man to be capable of any villainy. But there was no probability of getting Mitzi to divest herself of the prejudice she had in favour of the ugly Hungarian. If I had expressed but a little of my thoughts she would at once have accused me of wronging him, she would have resented it as an annoyance; and for no consideration would I wish to annoy her.

So I kept my suppositions to myself. One point above all seemed to me important. The thief must have known not only that, on receipt of the telegram, Mitzi would hurry off to Salzburg, but also that Fanny was

absent on a holiday. At one moment I suspected the plump servant girl of being Giulay's accomplice. What if her going to visit her dying mother had only been a feint? Suppose that she had returned in order to admit Giulay? However, I soon set aside this theory; Fanny was altogether devoted to Mitzi, and no consideration could have decided her to do such a treacherous thing.

I asked both of them, Mitzi as well as Fanny, whether anybody had known that the latter would have a three days' holiday. As I did not want to tell them why I asked the question, they did not think as hard as I should have liked. They could not remember. And Mitzi who, of course, guessed that my inquiry was somehow connected with the great mystery, only wondered why I still worried over that old, half-forgotten affair.

There is, as a matter of fact, a mistake into which readers of detective stories are generally enticed. It is to believe that the persons involved are doing nothing else but thinking of their case. They have no business, no trade nor profession, they have no friends to call upon, they have no letters to write, no plays to see, no books to read, they hardly ever rest, and they wash, dress, eat,

and sleep only when it is necessary for the conduct of the case. This is all untrue; in reality, it happens quite otherwise. I am sure I was as interested in my case as any detective in his, yet I thought of it only occasionally, and I went on having my lessons with old Hammer as well as with Mr. Doblana and thinking of my *Macbeth*.

When the horn-player first heard of my operatic ambitions, he said that it would be quite a good exercise, and that writing was the best way to learn how to do it. The opera would certainly not be performed, but that did not matter, as I was not working for money, being sufficiently well off without the paltry sums which I might earn in the form of royalties.

With Hammer it was quite otherwise. He grew immediately enthusiastic. Enthusiasm was one of his principal features. My words, repeated rather parrot-like from what Bischoff had said to me, namely, that it would be "a tissue of terror, of trembling, of anxious forebodings and of dreadful silence," pleased the old organist specially. To say the truth, I had no proper idea of how this tissue was to be produced.

Hammer told me that it always had been

his ambition to write an opera, but that he never had been able to find a libretto which he had judged suitable for his particular talent.

"Bischoff has proposed *Macbeth* to me too," he said. "But the objection that I believed myself unable to express the local colour was too great. I was afraid of failing in one of the most important points. This danger does not exist for a Scotchman like you."

"But I am no Scotchman."

"Isn't Hampstead in Scotland?" (He pronounced it Hampshtead with his undeniable Austrian accent.) "You told me, it was up North."

"North London—and you must not tell that to a Londoner—they believe it is West."

"I regret it for your sake. Have you any idea of Scotch folk tunes?"

"I know *Auld Lang Syne.*"

"That is better. But I advise you, before you begin with the composition of your great work, to write a few Scotch songs as an exercise, like Wagner, who wrote a few songs as studies for his *Tristan.*"

The advice seemed good to me, and I composed fifteen Scotch songs as an exercise

for *Macbeth* which, according to Mr. Doblana, was itself but an exercise for future operas. I chose them among the many lyrics, which exist in good metrical German translations, so that I had them ready in both languages. I wrote my songs in what seemed to me an incredibly short time at the rate of a song a day. Modest as I am, I must nevertheless confess that they are not bad, considering that I am... no, that I was a British composer. British composers have been told so many times about their having no talent that they have come to believe it. But it is not true. We have quite as much heart and feeling and imagination as other nations. Only we have also the fog. Which means that we may be allowed to be born in our isles, but that we will do well to go and compose somewhere else. This is what by chance I had done. Thus it happened that my fifteen Scotch songs were quite possible, and one at least was good. But who would not have been inspired by Sir Walter's immortal words?

"Breathes there the man, with soul so dead,
Who never to himself hath said
This is my own, my native land!
Whose heart hath ne'er within him burn'd,
As home his footsteps he hath turn'd,
From wandering on a foreign strand!"

These songs have never been printed, yet I am glad to have written them. They sleep in a drawer in a nice cosy house in Belsize Park. They sleep, but they are not dead. They live in my memory and remind me of the most beautiful day which was yet given me to live.

* * * *

Post.

And an exceptionally big mail, containing three letters and a few papers. The "Illustrated London News," sent to me by an old aunt. They are full of war pictures which she forwards to me so that I may have an idea how things look in reality, as we in the trenches have certainly only a very vague idea of the aspect of the whole business.

One of the letters is from a lady who signs Thirza Ellaline de Jones, and is addressed to my regimental number only.

"Dear №...," it runs, "if, as I suppose, you are a lonely soldier, I wish to inform you that I am willing to offer you my friendship, for I am myself a lonely maiden. I often think how awful it must be for you to have nobody to think of, and

that in your murderous business you are never relieved by that wonderful thought: 'It is for her that I do all these sanguinary deeds.'

"I am of a romantic, passionate nature, and I am sure you ought to like exchanging ideas with me. My character is rather pessimistic, having thoroughly read Shopenower (*sic*!), yet I feel sure I could cheer you up. Besides, I think that our acquaintance, started under the fire of the guns, could after the war lead to a more pleasant union. I am scarcely of middle age, but I look much younger than I am, and I feel younger still. I do not enclose my photo, for I think that men who have gone through the serious business of war are not concerned with trifles. But I may add this: The war will not finish before every man is disabled. You will then be entitled to a pension. If it pleases you, you may now add to this the amount of my private income which is of £140 a year.

"Answer by return, and you will be a dear.

"Yours ever,

"THIRZA ELLALINE DE JONES."

The letter is typewritten, and the traces of wax on the back show that it is reproduced from a stencil. What a mania!

The second letter is from a firm, Levy and Levy, who offer the highest prices for souvenirs, especially for German helmets.

And the third one is from home.

"My dear Patrick," writes the mater, "we are glad to hear that you are all right, and hope that you will endeavour to keep so. I strongly advise you to wear the same underclothing you are used to, namely, that of Doctor Lahmann. I would have sent you some, but I find that their place in Holborn has disappeared. They have probably been wound up by our Government, who do not see the difference between good and bad things. But I imagine that among the prisoners you take, you will find one able to procure from Germany whatever you want.

"I do not know on what mysterious business Bean is engaged. But she comes three times a week to town, all the way from Bedford. She says that what she does is a holy duty, which I think is rub-

bish. I suspect father of being in the the secret and resent his hiding it from me. Still, I must say that she is as pretty as ever, even prettier. And also that old Dicks is making pots of money out of a big Government contract for tinned vegetables.

"I regret your enthusiasm over father's silly idea to upset you by having your Scottish march played in the middle of the battlefield, instead of leaving you quiet and cosy in your trench. I hope that you will soon send us good news. I remain your always loving

"MOTHER."

And dad joins a half sheet :

"My darling boy,

"Nothing could please me more than the thought that you have been happy for a moment, while hearing the 'Pibroch o' Donuil Dhu.' I am so busy that I have scarcely the time to write. I will only add to what your mother says, that a word to the wise will be sufficient. Bean is the dearest girl I know and will be quite well off. And between men I may say this : I

know you used to object to her being so thin. She is growing plump now.

"A thousand kisses from your loving

"DANIEL COOPER."

Bean plump, Bean growing actually plump! I confess that this opens perspectives I had not suspected. Still...

You see, she is nine years my junior. And as I am twenty-nine (rather a ladylike age, isn't it?) you will be able to calculate that she is twenty. And I suppose that it is also twenty years since our respective respected parents regard us as betrothed. Yet, it has never been spoken out openly.

Violet Dicks, commonly called Bean, is indeed pretty. She plays the piano a little, but with such apathy that I have always avoided listening to her other musical achievements, which consist in a little singing and a little concertina playing. However, I must say that there is something like mutual consent in my ignorance of her musical performances. She is very shy, not generally, but in matters musical, and would never dare to sing or to play to a composer, even to an abdicated one. She plays tennis,

but is no good at bridge. She writes many unimportant letters, all exceedingly short, and never reads a book, nor anything else. She spends all her pocket-money on dragging her mother to London every time a new musical play comes on. She says she loathes them, but she is always hoping that there will one day be a good one. She is also interested in petty charities, bazaars, garden parties, and so on. And as far as it is possible with her, she is in love with me.

But I do not think that hers is one of those great, magnificent loves we read of in books. She is more a vegetable than a flower; as a flower she is only a violet, as a vegetable only a bean. A green bean. A slender, green bean.

Yet I have a certain tender feeling for her. I should not like her to suffer in the least. I feel myself quite capable of marrying her, and even of being a good husband to her, if it were absolutely necessary. On no account could I let her die from a broken heart. But then, I suppose it would not break.

She is not, like Thirza Ellaline de Jones, of a romantic, passionate nature, nor does

she even know that Schopenhauer ever existed. And if it were essential for a lonely soldier like me to exchange ideas with a female, I would rather do it with Bean who has none, than with Thirza Ellaline who has less. As for the reason why I do all these "sanguinary deeds," Thirza Ellaline must excuse me and mind her own business. There exists something which I should call the chastity of patriotic sentiment, and it would be immodest to divulge it.

No, Thirza Ellaline, oh thou of the unphotographable face! In spite of thy private income of £140 (and I add, not because of Bean's income which is probably twenty times bigger, a fact that I could overlook if thou wert a little more photographable and a little less pessimistic) I say *nay* to thee. Nay—never!

Whereas Bean... It is still: "not yet." But I confess that the idea of her has been growing lately somewhat more familiar. I do not know when, why, nor how that change began. That she wept when she heard the "Pibroch o' Donuil Dhu" performed by the band of the Salvation Army has but little to do with it. Weeping under such stress

has happened to more hardened people. Now there comes the news of her growing plump. But it comes as a mere abstraction, for I feel unable to imagine a flat pancake as a round dumpling. No, I don't know why, but there is now something in the word Bean—a meaning—which was not there before. It is but slight, yet it is. Still, can it ever grow as long as there lives the remembrance of another?

* * * *

Let me tell you how it occurred.

I had finished those Scotch songs and was rather pleased with them. They were written to suit Mitzi's voice, and so one evening I played them to her. The one I preferred, namely, Scott's *"Breathes there a man,"* was unfortunately the one which agreed least with her particular ability. But you ought to have heard her singing *"My heart's in the Highlands, my heart is not here."* There was such an ardent longing in her voice, such a desire of seeing again the mountains covered with snow and the "wild-hanging woods," and to hear once

more the "loud-pouring torrents." It was all so true, so sincere. I made her sing it again and again. She appreciated Burns' words. She had only to think of the beautiful Austrian Alps which she knew so well. But she understood also my setting of the words. She sang it as I would have done it, had I had a voice and mastered the difficulty of controlling it. She sang it directly out of my own soul. Never was there such a comprehension, such a communion of feelings.

She was standing behind me, a little to my right. Her pleasure in singing my song was equalled by mine at hearing her. When she had performed it eight or ten times I stopped at last. I was overcome with emotion.

And suddenly I felt her hand caressing my hair.

I trembled. I perceived something happening; a breath, so to say, a mere nothing. Joy and terror at once filled my heart. I gazed at her, and in the twilight I saw a tender smile around her lips. It made me feel out of breath, as if I had been walking too fast.

I got up.

"Let us go out a little," I said, "the evening is wonderful."

We went. Doblana was at the opera blowing his hard part in the *Mastersingers,* which would keep him till nearly midnight, and we had two hours and a half before us. The streets were already empty, for Vienna is a town that goes to sleep very early, thanks to a twopenny fine imposed on each inhabitant who comes home after ten o'clock. The sky was clear and the moon looked like a round silver cake from which somebody had helped himself to a tiny slice of the crust. No stars were visible, but as we had gained the boulevard, the electric lamps growing smaller and smaller in the distance appeared like starry dust.

We entered the municipal park. It was quite empty, and the right frame for romantic amours. For I knew by now into what our companionship little by little had grown. My heart was throbbing, hers probably too, and we felt that the park was an accomplice of the sentiments which were leading us along our walk.

There are many cosy corners in that park. And each one of these corners is

adorned with a statue. Before that of Schubert we halted. Why, I do not know, for it is not remarkable in any way. Yet we looked at it as if it had been the goal of our pilgrimage. We were as if transported. We were silent and gazed at Schubert as if he were something new and delightful, as if he were a new invention of the heart, enrapturing, transporting, fit to throw us into a sweet ecstasy. And yet he was only a fat gentleman in white marble, sitting in a chair and holding a conventional sheet of music paper in his hand.

Suddenly Mitzi began to sing softly :

"My heart's in the Highlands, my heart is not here..." and then the love that for months had been lying longingly at her door, and had voicelessly cherished her, the love, my love, broke forth. I caught her by the neck and bending my face down to her's I touched her lips, whispering :

"I love you, Mitzi, I love you."

Her eyes were closed and she kissed me back. Mine was a marvellous happiness, for I felt that I was her's, vanquished, beaten by her charm. My love was not a conquest, but a capitulation—and yet I was happy.

And now, pity me, compassionate reader, for... do you know how long my happiness was to last? Fate, cruel, inexorable fate, had allowed me one minute, one single minute. Then a devilish laughter, coming from some hidden corner in the shrubs, awoke me.

Of the old guilds of Vienna one still exists. It is the Company of the Bootmakers. Originally established to afford aid to necessitous members of their trade, the Company by payment of large sums obtained various monopolies. In London there are bootsellers, dealers in boots, which are manufactured in big factories. In Vienna there are still bootmakers. Their Company having from entrance fees, fines, and so on, acquired some money which was employed in the purchase of land, became known, because of the rise in the value of property, to have amassed enormous wealth. The bootmakers are still divided into masters, companions, and apprentices; and so rich is the guild that to be an apprentice bootmaker is sometimes more advantageous than to be a master in another trade. So is the fact explained that you may see walking about

in Vienna "bootmakers' lads" aged thirty or forty, very proud of their green aprons.

These "lads" provide one of the many typical figures of Vienna. They are the naughty boys of that city. There is no mischief they will leave undone, if they see a possibility of its performance. There is no cheeky remark they will leave unsaid. They are wasps, and every day a new exploit, or a new *bon mot* of a bootmakers' lad is told in Vienna.

It was such a lad who came laughing at us out of the shrubbery. I could have thrown myself upon him and given him the thrashing he deserved. But I stopped when I saw him in the moonlight.

He was a little man of about twenty-five. He was lame. He had black hair, a black moustache, and a pointed tuft of black beard on his chin, and with his mocking expression he reminded me of the Frenchman who at Salzburg had made room for... Mitzi, of the conductor who had united me to... Mitzi, and of the cabby who had brought me again to... Mitzi.

VIII.

MY first idea had been to talk immediately to Mr. Doblana and inform him that I intended marrying his daughter. I told Mitzi this while we were going home through narrow, dark streets, as becomes thieves and lovers. But she objected. She was rather cool, the result probably of yonder boot-makers' lad's intervention.

"I know you love me," she said, "and always will. I too love you, but I don't know yet how to do it well. I cannot tell you what I feel. If you were at once to speak to father, either he would say yes, or he would say no, but in both cases you would have to leave our house at once. Father is no artist, he is a trader in music, and he is meanspirited as all tradespeople are. He does not understand love as artists do. He would only see the impropriety of your

staying any longer with us. And I do not want to be lonely. I want you with me. Think only that I just found my heart. You do love me?"

I wanted to take her in my arms, and to kiss her again. But although there was nobody in the street she prevented it.

"And you always will love me?" she asked once more.

"Always, Mitzi!" I said.

And, my word, I am afraid that this *always* still holds good a little.

When we arrived at home Doblana was not yet in and Fanny had gone to bed. In the drawing-room, where a couple of hours before Mitzi had sung herself definitely into my heart, we halted. She looked at me, and I opened my arms; for a moment she laid her cheek against my shoulder, then she took my head between her hands and kissed me. It was very sweet... but it lacked Schubert.

Then she went into her room, and I into mine.

It was she who the next day came to speak about *Macbeth*.

"You want me to play *Lady Macbeth*?"

"Yes. Did you not ask me for some-

thing heroic? Is *Lady Macbeth* not the woman who tries to be stronger than man and who breaks up from over-exertion? Can you imagine anything more prodigious?"

"What am I to do with her?" she asked again after a while. "I re-read *Macbeth* last night. She is terrible. Think only, she says that while her baby was smiling in her face she would have dashed its brains out, had she sworn to do it. I know that art can receive a new meaning from all successive generations, but how can a woman in this century of longing for peace speak words which were horrible even in those times of torture?"

I was surprised at her question which filled me with great happiness. She had read *Macbeth* this very night. Was this not a wonderful proof of her love? And she had not read it superficially. Oh, what a happy man I was to be able to call such a girl my own!

But how to answer her question was beyond me. All I could find to say was this:

"You forget, Mitzi, that I will make *Lady Macbeth* a beautiful, flexible cat in the

first part, and a weak child in the second."

"My dear," she declared, "I fear that that is rather an empty sentence, and that you are not at all sure what you are going to make her."

I felt that her remark was just, and I resented her superiority a little. You see, I was a composer; and as a composer I believed that I need not *think* so very deeply, if only I *felt* profoundly. I suppose that most composers share this opinion, which may be erroneous.

Anyhow, I am sure that if I had been better at thinking (even at the cost of being less good at feeling) Mitzi would have preferred it. There were two Mitzis. The one was a very pretty, charming girl, yet probably somewhat insignificant. The other was an eminent artist, gifted in many respects. Instinctively it was the latter I loved. But to love a woman means to conquer her, not to be conquered. A superior woman wants to be vanquished by a more superior man. And I had capitulated already to the pretty girl. As for the artist, she simply annihilated me.

(The reader must not believe that these

war-like expressions are the result of my entrenched authorship. If I were to use the language which I have learned here I would have first to publish a trench dictionary. No—these expressions are only the result of newspaper reading.)

Two days went by. Then Mr. Bischoff called upon me and, as he wanted a thousand crowns*), he brought with him a detailed sketch of his libretto.

Happily Doblana was absent, which enabled Mitzi to assist at our interview. I told Bischoff that it was my wish to see the rôle of *Lady Macbeth* performed by Miss Doblana, but that this must for the present remain a secret to her father, who objected to an artistic career for his daughter.

Bischoff inclined his head without saying what he thought of my plan. Probably his conviction was that I was mad to confide my first work to a beginner, for this was what people generally believed. How many times have I been warned during the following months not to commit my opera to a "beginner"! But as it happened, the

* About £40.

great actor found that this "beginner" knew very well what she wanted.

"I do not think, Mr. Bischoff," she said, "that your libretto is any good, and should it remain as it is, I will probably not undertake to create the part of the lady."

"Oh!" answered Bischoff mockingly, "you have not yet been on the boards, and you already have a prima donna's caprices. You will make your way!"

"There is no use in talking like this," she exclaimed. "If nobody yet has thought of making a music drama of *Macbeth* there are good reasons. By himself Macbeth is a dull, heavy character."

Dear me! Bischoff's face!—You ought to have seen it. It was worth while. He took it personally—he out-shakespeared Shakespeare.

"You are a very young girl," he said at last, "to utter such criticism." And, turning to me: "I did not expect, when I came here, an adversary to whom I cannot speak as I should like to on account of her sex. It is most unfair."

"Neither my sex," cried Mitzi, "nor my youth have anything to do with what

you call my criticisms. At this moment I am no woman. I am but an artist, and as such I have the right to speak."

I should have gladly given whatever money I had in my pocket to be somewhere else; yet this very thought reminded me of the fact that Bischoff would bear a little more of Mitzi's argument, as there was a cheque at the end of it.

But while I pondered over these possibilities Mitzi was going on:

"Yes, Mr. Bischoff, Macbeth is a dull, heavy person. He does not do anything by himself. The witches who show him his future do not influence him."

"But, *Fräulein,* the witches are but a symbol of his ambitious ideas."

"Never mind... let us say then, that his ambitious ideas do not lead him into action. He must be dragged to it by his Lady. As a great criminal he is entirely overshadowed by her. Now, such a character may be interesting in a spoken tragedy, but not in music-drama. Further: Macduff is a typical tenor, and as such never interesting. Again, that fairy tale of Birnam wood coming to Dunsinane, do you think that it can

impress a modern public?"

"So you are against our scheme altogether?"

"Not in the least. But I want you to make a *Lady Macbeth* instead of a *Macbeth*. The Lady is the one interesting person in the whole drama. I want you to cut out all that does not concern her directly. I suggest that you make the first scene of the prophesy of the three witches, which is a grand opening. Then must follow a first act where at the beginning the Lady induces Macbeth to commit the murder and where at the end the deed is done. The second act should be the banquet..."

"And Banquo's ghost? What will you do with Banquo's ghost, if, as I suppose, you suppress Banquo?"

"Let it be King Duncan's ghost. As long as there is a ghost, it matters little whose ghost it is. Finally, the third act should be the scene where the Lady walks in her sleep. After this the interest is over. Let the public go home. It will have had quite enough of the nightmare."

She stopped and there was a long silence. The actor did not say one word,

and I did not dare to interfere. I am modest, I have reported that to you already. If I were not, I might have told you that Mitzi's plan, which certainly was good, was my invention. But I am proud of being modest and truthful.

At last Bischoff said :

"I apologise, *Fräulein,* for having been distrustful. Your scheme is workable."

"That is better, Mr. Bischoff," said my dear girl with a most bewitching, yet triumphant smile. "But I have not finished. I do not want to impersonate a mere monster. I consent to be a cat first, and a sick child afterwards, but I must know why—I will not be content with nice phrases. The Lady will be my début, and I want my début to be a triumph. Mr. Cooper does not seem to know exactly how to explain. Will you ?"

If Mitzi had shown her superiority up to this moment, it was now Bischoff's turn. As for me I had my favourite feeling : That of being... but why should I repeat it ? You know.

"It is only because your dull and heavy Macbeth is compatible with my theory of the Lady," began Bischoff, "that I can

give you the explanation you want. In my idea Macbeth was not heavy, but irresolute. Never mind, let him be heavy. In either case, the Lady is obliged to put a steam engine, if I may use this expression, in front of all she says, to carry him away. However, she shudders before her horrible words and deeds. She seems to shut her eyes not to see them. She is not a mere monster, to quote your own words, she is a poor weak woman, who loves that one man with such strength, that she has been able to discover all his failings, so that she may, with her trembling body, cover and protect the imperfections. You have only to search for her tenderness and you will find it. It is, for instance, with the utmost softness that you must say the words :

'Yet do I fear thy nature ;
It is too full o' the milk of human kindness.....
.....What thou would'st highly
That would'st thou holily.'

And it is only because she feels kindness, pity and peace in her heart that she calls the spirits : *'Come you spirits, unsex me here, and fill me top-full of direst cruelty.'* Again, she suffers when she cries : *That my*

keen knife see not the wound it makes, nor Heaven cry 'Hold, hold!' And how happy were she if she had known nothing of it all: *'What beast was it then that made you break this enterprise to me?'"*

"Yes," said Mitzi, "but immediately afterwards she says those horrible words about the babe..."

"That," answered Bischoff, "is effort. That is one of the sentences where she uses the steam engine to pull more vigorously. That you must say as if you were shuddering before your own words, as if you were feeling that it is too much. In short, the woman must continually appear under the mask of the monster, and this is the reason why I see the Lady cajoling her husband like a beautiful, flexible cat during the scene where she induces him to the murder. But as soon as the deed is done she shows all her weakness. Not to lose courage she has felt obliged to drink. Nevertheless, she starts at the slightest noise.

'Hark! Peace!
It was the owl that shriek'd, the fatal bellman,
Which gives the stern'st good-night.'

Think what anxiety, what sadness is contained in these words! And does she not confess that she is unable to commit the crime herself, when she says these words, which must be uttered with trembling love:

> 'Had he not resembled
> My father as he slept, I had done it.'

Thus the rôle must be played from beginning to end, Lady Macbeth as a woman, a weak woman, who knows her weakness:

> 'These deeds must not be thought
> After these ways; so, it will make us mad...'

a woman who at the end breaks down under the stress of the effort she has made. You must produce, as if by magic, love and pity for Lady Macbeth in the hearts of the audience, and never be a vulgar, awful criminal, a Gorgon, as actresses generally understand, or rather misunderstand the Lady."

"It will mean hard work," said Mitzi, "but I am not afraid. I mean to do it."

And turning to me she added:

"You had better begin working."

Indeed, I started that very evening.

* * * *

What is the bluest blue?

It is not the sky of Italy; it is not the Sapphire of the Maharajah of Baipal, it is not the Blue Diamond of the King of Siam, nor is it the blue gentian that blooms on the high Alps, it is not Rickett's blue, it is not Prussian blue, which is, parenthetically, out of fashion just now, nor is it the blue of a tuppence highpenny stamp. All these are blues. But the blues at the front when it rains, these are the bluest blues. And it never rains but it pours.

We sit there, the four of us, namely, Charlie, Guncotton, Pringle, and I.

We smoke and feel miserable.

"It rains," states Guncotton.

"Does it?" asks Charlie.

"It does," answers Pringle, and I finish the series with a:

"Rotten weather!"

A stillness follows.

We go on puffing, feeling thoroughly soaked.

"It begins to be wet," says I.

"It's water," explains Guncotton.

"You are sure it isn't champagne?" asks Charlie.

"Champagne!" sighs Pringle dreamily.

And we fall back into taciturnity.

"By the way," asks Pringle, "Sergeant, have you still got that bottle of of champagne?"

"Of course, I have."

"Well, as the official communiqué will be that bad weather has hampered fighting on the British front, why not go and fetch the bottle and break its neck?"

"My friend," says Charlie solemnly, "I have sworn an oath that I would not open that bottle so long as I had not got my commission!"

"You will not even open it to celebrate the recovery of your nose?"

"I will not. I have not brought it all the long way from the Dardanelles, through Egypt and the Mediterranean to France, only to forget my oath when I am so near my goal!"

That bottle of champagne has a history. When we were at the Dardanelles the Sergeant had made himself a wonderful dug-out, quite a spacious room, magnificently furnished with all sorts of empty cases. It was quite a cosy place. Charlie had even

caught a fox, that was his dog, and a kingfisher, that was his canary. On the completion of the abode we had a house warming. We were six, namely, the four inseparables whom you have the advantage of knowing, plus an Australian and a French guest.

The menu was:

SOUP.

Oxo.

ENTREE.

Kidneys

(obtained from the Butcher Sergeant in return for a pair of braces which he wanted badly.)

HORS D'ŒUVRES.

(Whilst we were eating our kidneys the French guest arrived. He was late. So we had the Hors d'œuvres, which he brought with him, after the Entrée.)

A Tin of Sardines.

JOINT.

Roast Chicken.

(This solid piece, the *chef-d'œuvre,* was a roast fowl, stolen by the Australian guest—

poor devil, I may make it public now, for he's dead—from the General. What busines had the General to keep chickens ?)

ENTREMET.

Omelette au Rum.

(The eggs were bought at the price of 1/- each from a Greek trader who had come over from Lemnos, but who had learned his trade in a London provision shop. The rum was Charlie's own savings for three weeks. Our ration was one-eighth of a pint twice a week.)

DESSERT.

Fruit

from Lemnos, too, which was the only cheap thing to be had there.

COFFEE.

WINES.

French wine,
A bottle of whisky,
And one of champagne.

That bottle of champagne had been

provided by Charlie. To get it, he had had to swim a quarter of a mile, in order to reach a certain ship—to swim with a sovereign in his mouth. There were still some such things as sovereigns in the world when this affair took place. The sovereign was put in a basket which had been lowered with a rope, the basket pulled on deck and lowered again with half a crown change and the bottle of champagne. On his way back Charlie did not know whether to spit his half crown out or to swallow it, whether to let go the bottle or not. For there was a heavy sea. But somehow he reached the shore and landed the bottle, the half crown and himself quite safely.

Well, the dinner party in Charlie's dug-out went splendidly. But just at the moment when we were about to open the bottle of champagne, there was a surprise attack from the Turks, a regular alarm, a call to arms, (which I need not explain, as "alarm" is only a perverted form of *à l'arme*!—to arms!).

"Never mind," cried Charlie, "We'll drink the champagne another time, when I get my commission. I swear I'll keep this

bottle till then."

Since that day he has fulfilled his promise. The bottle is the only thing he took with him when we evacuated the Peninsula.

And now, when we have got the blues, he refuses to open it. And, my word, our blues are of a true blue, a Conservative blue. Not the light blue of Cambridge, but the dark blue of Oxford. We have even blue blood in our veins, and call the Germans Blue-beards. If we were to take any pills, they would be blue pills. Our flag could be the Blue Peter. And we have such a blue funk, lest this confounded rain should never cease, that we talk of our blues till we get blue in the face. Not even Guncotton, who is very skilled in pyrotechnics and has manufactured a sort of little cartridge with which he cleverly imitates Will-o'-the-wisps, is able to enliven us. The daily display of pyrotechnics of a somewhat more awe-inspiring sort has rendered us positively cloyed with that pleasure.

But Pringle, since Charlie's refusal to open his bottle, has remained dreaming. Finally he steals away. We wait five minutes, ten minutes, a quarter of an hour. In

the end he comes back holding a shell in his arms. It is about four inches in diameter and twelve in length. He settles down and slowly starts unscrewing the fuse.

"Look out," warns Guncotton. "These things explode sometimes..."

"That's just what I want," declares Pringle tragically. "I want to put an end to all this misery of ours."

Then, when the shell is unscrewed, he passes it to the Sergeant.

"Have a drop?" he asks.

The shell goes round.

"Our blues turn pink," says I.

"Like litmus paper under the influence of an acid," explains Guncotton.

"Acid?" asks Pringle reproachfully. "It's brandy. The best brandy possible."

"French brandy," says I.

"*Vive la France!*" cries Charlie.

* * * *

We have had another fight... a day of manifold horrors and of deafening explosions. We have killed many Germans and many of our own homes were put into mourning. I

shall make no attempt at describing this battle. It is over, thank God, and I turn from its monstrosities to my peaceful occupation of remembering what happened in days gone by.

I was perfectly happy in spite of the fact that Mitzi had no overflowing heart. You will be good enough to remember that on the day of our first meeting in the railway carriage P. C. 3.33 she remained clad in mystery all the way from Salzburg to Vienna, and that, while I told her all about myself, I did not learn anything about her. This more or less repeated itself now. I let her peep into the inmost recesses of my heart, and there is certainly nobody who has such a complete acquaintance with that organ of mine, which circulates my blood, my feelings, my thoughts.

Mitzi's heart remained ever an unknown quantity to me. I think this is a bad habit of woman. Dad always pretends that there is a corner of the mater's heart into which Daniel Cooper & Co., Ltd., have never penetrated. I am afraid this corner is the most important one of a woman's heart. Nobody ever explores it, not even the woman to

whom the heart belongs. Perhaps she dares not.

So it was with Mitzi. She was sweet, and I am sure she loved me; yet she kept her secret corner hermetically closed. There was no need of writing on that heart: Trespassers will be prosecuted, for there was no possibility of trespassing.

If I were not so modest I should say that what she most loved in me was my musical talent. I had an experience of this on the morrow of that interview which had taken place between her, Bischoff, and myself.

"Are you going to see Bischoff?" she asked as I was to leave for what we called my lesson with Hammer.

I answered that it had not been my intention, but that I might see my collabor ator if she had any particular wish.

"I have," she said. "Your *Lady Macbeth* scarcely leaves me a restful minute. I have thought that it will be very difficult to show the weak, feminine side of the part in music, without a certain external help."

"What do you mean by this?" I asked.

"I mean some lyrical detail which in my opinion must be added. Could the words

'I have given suck, and know
How tender 'tis to love the babe that milks me.'

could these words not be the excuse for a sort of lullaby? And then in the scene where she walks in her sleep; as we have cancelled all Macduff, the Lady can no more say: '*The thane of Fife had a wife; where is she now?*' But I think the lullaby could be repeated in her dream. It would be, when it comes first, only a remembrance, and when it comes for the second time only the dream-memory of that remembrance. It would have to be very mysterious and so in keeping with the general character of the whole drama."

Mitzi's idea may give you a notion of her artistic instinct. Perhaps I ought not to call it artistic, but theatrical or operatic. For, although the idea was excellent and proved so, its staginess, its artificiality cannot be denied.

Anyhow, I was then enthusiastic about it. I went to Hammer, who advised as accompaniment for this not yet composed lullaby a succession of major thirds in the lowest notes of the flutes; a suggestion which I applied, but not without the greatest diffi-

culty, in the first version of that little piece, while when it came back in the dream scene I replaced the flutes by muted violins. I remember this detail, because when *Lady Macbeth* was performed, Hammer came greatly excited after the first act to me protesting that his advice had been bad, and the highest notes of the bassoons would have been better than the lowest of the flutes, whereupon I told him in my excusable excitement that I did not care, or, to employ the Austrian expression, and that it was all "sausage to me."

Indulgent reader, do not be cross with me because I speak of these professional details. Having shown you sufficiently that I am no more a musician, I may be allowed to remember that once upon a time I was one.

I ran to Bischoff. And so pleased was he with Mitzi's suggestion that he wrote there and then the words of that lullaby. In the afternoon I worked with Mr. Doblana on the score of his *Aladdin,* which was advancing rapidly and in my judgment becoming a distinctly charming ballet.

Then only did I find time to compose the

lullaby. It is a weird yet tuneful little piece which took me but half an hour to write down.

When Mitzi heard it she was enraptured. She let herself fall in my arms and looked at me with loving eyes.

"Oh Patrick," she said, "you will write a masterpiece for me, won't you?"

I promised. Never had I felt so much sympathy between us.

"I will do my best, Mitzi," I replied, "for I love you, love you truly, you are my better self, you are my good angel."

She laughed. Yes, she laughed at my fervent words.

"How solemn you are, Patrick. How English. You declaim as if you wanted to appeal to my passions."

"Mitzi, I cannot help worshipping you. No woman can wish to be loved better than I love you."

I found my words quite nice and the right thing to say. But she went on laughing.

"I can make any man say that to me. But I doubt whether I can make any man compose a beautiful opera. Will you?"

"Is my lullaby not to your taste?"

She seemed doubtful.

"One swallow does not make a summer."

I felt it like a bitter pang, as if I were forsaken by her. Artists are such sensitive plants. Oh, imaginative reader, fancy your Patrick Cooper as a Mimosa whose leaves have just been touched. My life seemed pale, my prospects desolate, my hopes dead. And all that because Mitzi had laughed when my heart had been glowing.

Yet the phenomena of irritability last but one moment in the Mimosa, and the subtle doom that had struck my love lasted not much longer.

Now, when writing this I see how fearfully weak I was.

A few days later, the holidays at the Opera having begun, Doblana and Mitzi left for a little place in the Salzkammergut, St. Gilgen, not far from Salzburg, and I for England, where I was to stay for a few weeks with my parents.

IX.

THE mater had suffered from rheumatism, and therefore Harrogate had been chosen as a summer resort. Besides, at that time, there still existed a Mrs. Dicks, who was always liverish and who had been ordered to Harrogate, too. Mrs Dicks was the best soul you could imagine, but a very plain woman. Yet when she died a couple of years after the events I am recording, her husband mourned her deeply. To anybody who wanted to hear it he stated that he had lost the best of wives and Bean the best of mothers.

Mrs. Cooper and Mrs. Dicks were great friends, which provided (in the form of endless chats) some consolation for their forced stay at Harrogate. For I cannot think that anybody would go to Harrogate if he was not obliged. Perhaps it was because I came

straight from Vienna, which is surrounded by the most lovely villages and woods, I could not find the slightest charm in the tedious landscape of Harrogate with its tiny heath and nearly invisible pine forest. After what I used to hear in Vienna, the so-called music in the Valley Gardens appeared to me a parody without any sense of fun. And after the fragrance of the air on the *Kahlenberg*, in the *Brühl*, or on the *Eisernes Thor*, where I had made excursions, the rotten egg perfume of the sulphur springs at Harrogate was simply repulsive.

And then, instead of Mitzi, I had Bean. She was at that time a mere kid of twelve, just beginning to be a flapper. I have generally been shy with young ladies, and have avoided their company. But I never have considered Miss Violet Dicks a young lady. She just was Bean—and is still.

You will have noticed that my modesty has hitherto prevented me from giving a detailed description of your humble servant's physical charms. Be it sufficient for you to know that there were at Harrogate many ladies whose profession, not to call it trade, was to be young. Ladies who used to let

their eyes rest with all signs of satisfaction on my tall and evidently handsome figure.

Being afraid (I think you can fancy my feelings) I used Bean as a shield. I would not take a walk without her by my side to protect me from some suppositious attack by one of the ladies, in whom I saw so many birds of prey. I daresay it was dreadfully mean of me to misuse the child like this. For when we rambled along the fields I scarcely spoke, absorbed as I was in the mental work on *Lady Macbeth,* an effort that never ceased. Yet, although I took so little notice of her, the child's eyes were always shining, and whenever she spoke her voice was thirsting with excitement.

Once I asked her if my taciturnity did not annoy her.

"Oh!" she answered, "it is just splendid to be with you. I know you think of music. You listen to your thoughts. One day I will listen to your music. I am waiting. I won't get impatient."

"Should you like to know the plot of my opera?"

"Oh, it would be just delightful!"

Just splendid. Just delightful. That

was her way of expressing herself.

I told her the story of *Lady Macbeth.*

"I am sure," she said when I had finished, "if you do it, it will be very beautiful. This evening, will you play that lullaby to me?"

I objected, for I did not like to play the piano at the hotel where we would be at once surrounded by these offensive acquaintances you are compelled to make in watering-places. But Bean begged so much that in the end I yielded.

While I was playing she seemed pale and strangely spiritual, watching me with adoring eyes. When I had finished she said nothing. Not one word. But when shortly afterwards she went to bed we shook hands, and I noticed that her's was as cold as ice.

"Good night, kiddy," I said.

She only pressed my hand a little harder, but said nothing.

The two maters noticing, of course, the incident and greatly exaggerating its importance, found in it some fuel for the cherished hopes that were burning in their breasts.

There was some more of that fuel in

store. For when Bean and I went a few days later to Knaresborough, where I offered her a little row, what if she did not go and upset the boat, so that our row became a swim!

She uttered an imploring cry, but the next moment I had her in my arms. She clung to me quite desperately, her slender little body shaken by fright one moment, by a storm of laughter the next. The situation was not without danger, and the anxiety in my own heart made me rather tender with the kid. Yet, we safely reached the shore, where she lay exhausted, her hands keeping their hold of me, and murmured:

"Oh Pat... Pat... how brave you are..."

And after a while she added:

"I knew you were brave, when I heard that you were going to tackle *Lady Macbeth.*"

From that moment I was so much fêted, so often called a hero, so incessantly praised for having saved Bean's life, that I took to flight. I did not even wait till the parents returned to London.

At the station Bean pushed a few roses in my hand. She seemed serious, and I felt

her tiny fingers tremble.

"You'll keep them?" she asked.

"I will, kiddy."

Reader, you must by now be well aware of my character, and therefore know that I kept the roses. However, as the petals have gone, all I still possess is the stalks. I think this detail would interest you, for I know you all sympathize with Bean.

I think I also ought to tell you that I had given Dad a hint—although only a delicate one—of what he had to prepare for, concerning Mitzi. Dad and I had never had any secrets from each other, and there was a really chummy relation between us both. I confess that I understood nothing of his Insurance schemes, yet I never objected to any of them. I was in consequence rather surprised to find him a little cool when I spoke about my Austrian love. He pretended that I was speaking only of my future primadonna, not of my promised bride, and even for the former he showed a certain mistrust. Once more I heard the old story that it was dangerous to confide the success of my opera to a beginner. Of course, I forgave him, for it was his rôle,

being the eldest, to be careful. And then, he did not know Mitzi.

Anyhow, the little I had said about her prevented me from staying at Doblana's house as I had done before, and though Mitzi objected I had to tell the horn-player the reason. I was much too much imbued with the English idea of a long engagement not to have been taken completely by surprise when his first question was, On what date did I intend to fix the marriage. However, although I could only answer that I had not yet thought of it, but that I hoped Mitzi would not oblige me to wait more than a year or eighteen months, he received my invitation to regard me as his future son-in-law fairly well.

As I have already intimated, Mitzi did not seem at all pleased. She pretended that I had robbed her, by speaking so early to her father, of all the sweetness of our secret love. And I am sure we would have quarrelled over this point had I not remembered of a saying of my dear dad, that married life was an uninterrupted series of concessions, and had I not applied this principle also to the time preceding the marriage.

There was another reason for my forbearance : a composer must hold his temper in check with his primadonna. It was, however, more difficult than one may think, for I found Mitzi on my return to Austria altogether... somewhat changed.

You will remember that the late Mrs. Doblana had on her death-bed implored her husband to let bygones be bygones, and to reconcile himself with the Archduke Alphons Hector and his children. Up to now the horn-player had refused. But as the moment of the performance of his *Aladdin* was approaching, his highly developed sense for all that touched his interests told him that a more conciliatory attitude would be advisable. His sojourn at St. Gilgen, at a short distance from Salzburg, was probably not chosen without intention, and whilst he did not himself see Franz and Augusta von Heidenbrunn, he tacitly consented to Mitzi frequenting them freely.

You will perhaps remember that I had a certain mistrust of the Countess Augusta. On what that mistrust was based I am quite incapable of saying. It was mere instinct. But I have always noticed that girls, as soon

as they were friends, had secrets. And these secretive manners have, in my idea, an evil influence on their morals.

It is to the influence of Augusta von Heidenbrunn that I attributed the fact of finding Mitzi, as I have said, altogether... somewhat changed. This expression must not be taken as funny. She was changed very little indeed, but that little change affected her through and through. I still knew little of women, but I would have been, say, colour-blind had I not noticed that something had happened.

She had always liked to go out, but now the number of errands which obliged her to be away from home had increased enormously. I had thought that our London cook held a record for outings—still, Mitzi beat her.

Again, she had always been nicely dressed, but now the care she took of her toilet had increased tenfold.

Sometimes when I arrived at the Karlsgasse I found her pensive, not to say gloomy, at other times excitedly merry.

When I asked her that inevitable question: "You love me?" which I am sure is

asked a hundred times a day between any engaged couple, she still answered that she did and knew her love was not good enough; but she also added that she was my *friend,* and that her *friendship* should be a pillar for our future happiness. Sometimes her tenderness was overflowing, sometimes she she was sulky and inscrutable.

Once, after one more unsuccessful trial at singing my song *Breathes there a man,* I signified my regret and my doubt whether she would ever be able to express what I had tried to indicate in that song. Thereupon she declared that her singing was much too good for my song.

"That is entirely true," was my answer, "but you should not say so."

"Anyhow," she retorted, "I think that in matters artistic I reason at least as closely and rightly as you; and in these questions one may always rely in preference on a woman's judgment. Women possess infinitely more delicacy."

"Say that you dislike that song..."

"I will never say that, because I like everything you compose. But am I not free to sing what I choose?"

All this frivolous cavilling was unimportant. I remembered Daniel Cooper and his female partner. There cannot be a couple better mated than these two. I don't think that they ever quarrelled, but there was a continuous wrangling over small, insignificant details, a miniature feud, just enough to prevent monotony. Evidently my married life was to be a similar one.

Yet, once there arose such a difference between Mitzi and me that I was afraid lest it should mean the breaking off of our match.

I hope that you have still some slight remembrance of what we will call "The Mystery of the Griseldis score." Anyhow, if you have forgotten, neither Mr. Doblana nor his daughter had. He always treated her with the same coldness. I, of course, could not notice it, as I had never seen them on more friendly terms, but Mitzi often complained of his indifference. And it was only too natural that "The Mystery of the Griseldis score" should return again and again in our talk, as it had been the origin of our love.

Well, as *Lady Macbeth* was advancing rapidly, it became necessary to find a

theatre for its first performance, and as I had not the slightest experience in theatrical business, and as Mr. Doblana assured me that there were at the Imperial Opera enough new things accepted to fill at least two years (his *Aladdin* amongst others) I decided to accept the services of a theatrical agent. Mitzi advised me to go to Giulay. Indeed, he had the reputation of being very clever. But every agent has. Nor was it his quasi-celebrity that induced me to call upon him. It was the fact that I still held that his part in "The Mystery of the Griseldis score" had been deeper than Mitzi suspected.

I called upon him and found him to my surprise completely businesslike. He was still ugly, and his voice loud and discordant, but he did not in his office tell any funny yarns as he used to do at the Round Table. That he was clever, there could not be the slightest doubt, for in scarcely a week's time he had induced the manager of the Brünn municipal theatre to play my opera. At the same time he also settled that Mitzi was to make her début as Lady Macbeth. Mitzi, or as she was called in the contract, Amizia Dobanelli. Four performances were mutually

guaranteed—by the manager to be performed—by me to be paid for should the receipts not be sufficient.

Please, merciful reader, spare me; and do not enquire about the other points of that contract. They were so many humiliations. It would make me blush. Still it was a contract, and I confess, I would not have been able to get it by myself.

My business with Giulay had been the pretext for much intercourse, and my desire to know him better had determined me to see him more often than was strictly necessary.

One day I found an old lady in his office. Like Giulay, she wore a lot of jewellery, like Giulay she had a discordant voice. And from one particularity, namely, from the extraordinary amount of refractory black hair which grew in her nose I could make a guess at some consanguinity. As a matter of fact she was his mother, and in spite of her negative beauty seemed to be a decent sort. Giulay made a fuss about me and my opera, and the result was an invitation to come and lunch on the following Sunday with the two Hungarian people at their

home in the Maroccanergasse. This street, although situated in a fashionable quarter, was far from smart, the principal reason for this being that one side was filled nearly in the whole of its length by the ugliest barracks in the whole town. So at least the negative beauty of the two Giulays was in harmony with their surroundings. Nor was the house where they lived one of the palatial buildings of which you see so very many in Vienna. It was a modest dwelling, one of those habitations where fortunes are made rather than spent. There was no marble hall, no carpet in the stairs, no electric light. Still it was very decent. In the third story of this house my hosts had their abode.

When I rang the bell, Maurus Giulay himself came to open the door. The apartment had an air of stinginess which contrasted with its jewel-bedecked inhabitants. It was all respectable and without any artistic taste, the right lodging for small people. Only one detail struck me as remarkable, namely, that the walls of the drawing-room were entirely covered with photographs. There were artists and artistes, authors and composers, some

famous and most unknown. Whether there was any wall paper beneath these photos I could not say; probably there was, but it had certainly not proved sufficiently hideous.

The meal was scanty and pretended to be refined. We had about two dessert-spoonfuls of soup served in coffee cups, then a little anchovy paste on tiny pieces of toast as a hors d'œuvre, and one whiting between us three. I must say that the old lady hardly ate anything, busy as she was waiting upon us two gentlemen. Yet it looked rather funny, that solitary whiting, as did afterwards the two thrushes for three, accompanied by a little salad adorned with a hard egg, which was cut into quarters, so that there was even one too many. And then there was a little cheese, a little butter, with a little bread, and a little fruit, very little, and some coffee in mocha cups, viz.: smaller cups than those which had served for the soup.

There was also in the centre of the table a cake, rather a large cake, if you please, and to be candid, I had enjoyed the prospect of having some. I daresay I would have endured it. But none was offered, and to

this day I do not know whether it was a dummy or a real one, and in the latter case whether it was one they had kept from one year to the other for such festivities, or if it was to serve for another party in the evening.

Yet, I must not get too slanderous, for there was at least one thing I enjoyed thoroughly: a Coronas cigar that Giulay offered me. It is not an expensive cigar, costing about sixpence, but I recommend it to the few Englishmen who will, after the war, visit Austria.

While I was smoking it, Mrs. Giulay apologized for her lunch and especially for her waiting upon us.

"You see," said she, "it is not at all easy to be at the same time cook, housemaid, and hostess. But I am used to having no servants. When Maurus was born, his father was a dying man. I was left very poor. I have had to struggle badly to give my boy a sound commercial education. I could not afford a servant girl during these hard times. Ten years ago he opened his agency and was at once very successful. Still for several years the utmost economy

was necessary. Then the habit was formed; and I cannot get myself used to the idea of having a servant."

I did not, on the moment, reflect on this story. I only said to myself that one must not judge people by appearances, and that Mrs. Giulay was a more worthy woman than I had at first conceived.

But afterwards, when I had left them, I meditated how little progress I had made by my connexion with Giulay in the "Mystery of the Griseldis score." And then, suddenly, an idea struck me which would have made me go immediately to the Karlsgasse if it had not been a Sunday, and if I had not known that the person who unexpectedly had become very important in my clue, was then not to be found there.

The next morning, however, saw me at Doblana's house. He was not in, Monday mornings being regularly devoted to orchestra rehearsals at the Opera.

I asked Mitzi to call Fanny and to be present at the interview I wished to have with the maid. Mitzi, of course, laughed at my seriousness, but summoned the girl, who came, smiling and plump as always.

"Fanny," I began, "do you remember, when we first investigated the affair of *Fräulein's* visit to Salzburg, that you said, you knew that it was then a month since Mr. Giulay had left Vienna even for half a day?"

Fanny did not answer.

"Surely you remember?" I asked again.

"Perhaps," she said.

"And I wanted to know," said Mitzi, "*how* you knew this?"

"Exactly," said I, and turning again to Fanny, "And what did you answer?" I inquired.

Again the girl remained silent.

"You said," I went on, "that you had made friends with the cook of Mrs. Giulay."

"I did not," declared Fanny instantly.

"How can you say so?" cried Mitzi. "I distinctly remember that you did."

Fanny insisted on her denial. I remained for a moment impressively silent.

"And what if I did?" finally demanded the servant who by now had ceased smiling.

"Oh, that is very simple," I declared, "Mrs. Giulay has no cook."

"She had one at that time."

"No. She has had no cook, nor other servant, for thirty-five years."

Fanny seemed smitten with uneasiness, and I went on:

"Well, as you did not learn what you stated from that imaginary cook, who then did you learn it from?"

"I do not remember the whole affair," she returned doggedly.

I made a beautiful gesture with my hand and turned to Mitzi.

"A short time before I went to England I found out what had so much upset your father. Your visit to Salzburg had been used for foul play; during your absence your father's score of *Griseldis* had been stolen."

"What?" cried both women.

"It is so," I continued. "Mr. Doblana suspects that it was stolen with *Fräulein* Mitzi's support. This, and the desire of the Archduke that no fuss should be made in which his name would necessarily be involved has prevented police inquiries. But I do not share Mr. Doblana's opinion. I thought and, of course, still think, that

Fräulein Mitzi is absolutely innocent. I believed then that the Salzburg wire had been sent by the Comtesse Augusta..."

"Oh!" cried Mitzi.

"I believed so until yesterday. I apologize now; my suspicion was evidently erroneous. I also thought that for some unknown reason Mr. Giulay had stolen the score..."

"Oh!" exclaimed Mitzi again.

And Fanny protested vigorously:

"It is not true!"

"In this part," I declared, "I feel unable to give in. My proof is that Fanny tried to protect Mr. Giulay by telling us that story of the cook, and again tries to shield him now."

"What else?" asked Fanny ironically.

"Fanny and Giulay," I concluded triumphantly, "acted in agreement. Fanny was in Giulay's service, was his accomplice. Her leave had begun on the Friday morning. She went at once to Salzburg from where she sent the wire. There is a train leaving Vienna at ten o'clock which arrives at three in Salzburg. *Fräulein* received the wire at about five. It fits to a nicety."

"It is not true!" cried the maid again, bursting into tears.

"Then why," prompted I, "why did you tell that story of the cook? Why did you declare that you knew that it was a month since Mr. Giulay had left Vienna even for half a day?"

She sniffed.

"Fanny," said Mitzi gently, "you have always been a good girl. Why did you tell these lies?"

Fanny sniffed more. With her nose, with her mouth, with all her throat. If it had been possible she would have sniffed with her ears. But there came no reply.

"Fanny," repeated Mitzi, "you see that appearances are all against you."

A paroxysm of sniffing answered, while the girl assented with her head, and her tears redoubled. Who would have thought she had so much water in her?*

"You must tell us the truth," insisted Mitzi. "You will understand that by your silence you only strengthen the suspicion which lies upon you."

* Apologies to Shakespeare.

There was a pause. And then, suddenly, Fanny turned upon me with clenched fists, her wet face purple with rage. She trembled with anger.

"What did I do to you," she said with a cry of exasperation, "that you should come and wrong me so? I am no thief, nor is Mr. Giulay. He has not taken the music, nor have I sent the wire..."

"But, Fanny," interrupted Mitzi.

"No *Fräulein,* it's no use... you wont prove anything. The young gentleman wants to know the truth. Well, I will say the truth: I used to walk out with Mr. Giulay..."

Mitzi and I were speechless at this revelation.

"...and during these three days we were on the Semmering* together and didn't leave each other for a minute. That's all. And now, *Fräulein* will be good enough to take my notice."

With these words Fanny left the room. And then another tempest burst. This time I was the victim. I will not give you many

* A popular holiday resort, two hours south of Vienna.

details. But you may imagine Mitzi's state of mind. She had in one minute, as the result of Fanny's confession, lost a good maid who had faithfully served her for six years, and seen her belief in her esteemed friend Giulay ruined, Giulay, who was carrying on a love affair with such a low class girl. And all that through me, without my having even succeeded in finding a solution for "The Mystery of the Griseldis score."

I will add here that Fanny informed her fancy gentleman of the whole discussion, and how I had suspected her and him. You will not be surprised to hear that the theatrical agent's interest in me and my work disappeared there and then, and that he did not undertake one more step for me.

But this is only a secondary matter. For the present the avalanche of reproaches that fell on me was quite sufficient. A regular scene took place between Mitzi and her detective-composer. (For wasn't I a student in both these callings, of which I can only say that either is the worse?)

You, who have been kind enough to read these confessions, you know that I gave my

inmost heart to the composition of my *Lady Macbeth,* and you will learn only too soon how I fared. So much for the composer. Now for the detective. You also know with what care I investigated "The Mystery of the Griseldis score," how patiently I waited and kept my suspicions for myself as long as I was not sure. If in the end I was deceived by appearances, if I made a blunder, was it my fault? What business had Fanny to walk out with Giulay, and Mitzi to embark upon an operatic career against the wish of her father?

Well, we were very busy, Mitzi saying nasty things to me, and I trying to soften her, when we heard Mr. Doblana's key turning in the lock. He was coming home from his rehearsal. Then we perceived the noise of a smaller key. He was opening the letter box. And after a minute he walked in, finding us seated in two opposite corners of the room, as far as possible from each other—Mitzi looking sullen—I meek.

And he? Gracious me, what a sour face he made. He walked up and down for a minute or so, and if there had been on our part the slightest wish to talk, we would not

have dared to do it, so cheerful did he look.

At last he mumbled a few words about treachery, respect due by the children and so on, and after these short preliminaries the storm, the third one of the day, broke forth. He had just received a letter from the manager of the Brünn municipal theatre. Miss Doblana not being of age, her father was required to endorse the contract.

My word, he was in a rage. No!—he was not going to give his consent to such utter folly. He was indignant at being deceived in this way.

"Have I not a thousand times expressed my wish that you should not go on the stage?"

"Oh," answered Mitzi sweetly, "you have certainly done it more than a thousand times. But I have failed to understand why."

"Is the example of your unhappy aunt, of La Carina, not enough?"

"My mother, too, was an operatic singer."

"I do not speak of your mother, I speak of your aunt."

"Well, what of her?"

"Was her's not a life of shame?"

"I feel unable to see it in that light."

"Was your mother not ashamed of her? Did she not for years hide from me the mere existence of your aunt Kathi, of La Carina? Was I not cheated by your mother every day exactly as I have now been cheated once more by you? And what for? I ask you, what for? Do you think that every she-cat that walks miaowing over the boards will find an Archduke?"

I thought that it was time for me to step into the battle.

"Mr. Doblana," I declared, "Mitzi is to sing *Lady Macbeth* in my opera."

"Mr. Co-oper," he returned sharply, "Mitzi will do nothing of the sort."

"You forget that all has been arranged with the manager of the theatre."

"I forget? Really? Do I? What a bad memory I have. It is true. I forget. I even forget that I was consulted on behalf of my daughter. No, Mr. Co-oper, I know Mitzi better than you do, better than anybody does, and I forbid her to go on the stage. She has not the moral force of her mother. She is as weak as her aunt was."

Mitzi had turned her back to us and was drumming on the window panes. I admired her once more—I cannot sufficiently repeat how pretty she was from... behind, too.

"And, Mr. Doblana, if I beg of you to let her sing the *Lady Macbeth,* which I have written especially for her, if I beseech you to permit it?"

"I will say no. You would be the first to repent it. Mitzi has no moral strength. A girl who supports her father's enemies."

Mitzi turned sharply round.

"Father!" she protested in a husky voice, "I know that I owe you respect. But such calumny cannot be allowed."

"Be quiet, Mitzi," I said gently, "let me do the talking."

And turning to Doblana I declared so firmly that I hardly recognized my own voice:

"Either you will give your consent to Mitzi singing *Lady Macbeth,* or I will marry her within a month, even against your will if it must be, and I will then be the one master to decide whether she may or may not go on the stage."

My unexpected vigour had a double

effect. Doblana gave in, and Mitzi became reconciled with me. I may even say that she never before had loved me so well as she did after that third thunderstorm. And she gave me of her own free will a photograph of hers for which I had long begged in vain.

While she still held it in her hand she asked me:

"So, when we will be married, you will be my absolute master?"

"Yes, Mitzi."

"I will be your property, your thing, all yours?"

"Yes, Mitzi."

"And you?"

"Am I not yours already?"

She kissed me. Then she took the photo. and wrote across it: "*Meinem* Patrick, *seine* Mitzi"—"To *my* Patrick, *his* Mitzi."

* * * *

Sergeant Young, who pursues the story of my Austrian love with the greatest interest asks me:

"Have you still got that photo?"

"I have."

"Would it not make a good frontispiece

for your book if ever it is printed?"

"A frontispiece?"

Of course, I am greatly surprised at this question. When an author, even if he is a former composer and at present a Lance-Corporal, writes a book he does not think of such paltry things as the frontispiece. And then—it is quite bad enough to show to an inquisitive reader my heart, or whatever name you like to give to that organ... But her face!... Mitzi's face?...

You see, something curious has happened. When I started writing this I was still in the power of Mitzi's charm. Slowly I have been made to feel that I am setting myself free from it. I write the whole adventure off my heart, with all its joys and all its sorrows. Yet I cannot make up my mind to give away her features. But, if really these pages one day do appear in print, and if you find Mitzi's photo reproduced as the frontispiece—then, affectionate reader, you will know that writing my story has cured me altogether, completely.

In the meantime the Sergeant wants to see the photo. So I visit my kit bag. Therein is a parcel. All it contains is three

photos and... I may as well tell you, as you know all about it... the stalks of those roses Bean gave me so long ago. The three photos are Pa, Ma, and Mitzi. (I hope you did not expect them to be Messrs. Hammer, Doblana and Giulay.)

The three photos are well wrapped first in some tissue paper, then in a considerable amount of strong brown paper, and finally in a sheet of oil cloth. Thus they have been able to stand the fatigues of war.

I show the Sergeant first the face of Daniel Cooper, and then that of the mater. He remains rather indifferent, but says politely :

"They seem to be nice people."

The stalks of Bean's roses, I show him not.

But I uncover Mitzi's likeness.

Charlie looks at it and frowns. After a while he gives it back to me.

"Well?" I ask.

He does not reply. But suddenly he gets up.

"You'll excuse me," he says.

And he goes.

What's the matter now?

X.

I CANNOT conceive anything so fascinating in an operatic composer's life as the rehearsals of a new work of his. When he first hears in reality the tunes, the harmonies, the combinations of sounds which he had up to that moment heard only in his fancy, a profound terror overcomes him. The positive, actual achievements of the singers and the orchestra are so far from the ideal abstractions his fancy had supposed. Can it be possible that this shapeless noise should represent his score? The melodies are hardly recognizable, erroneous intentions of the singers deteriorate the musical sense, wrong notes hurt the poor composer's ears. But by and by the whole thing improves. Mistakes are corrected, the meanings of musical phrases are explained and the distress of the unhappy man vanishes.

I will not tell you the alarm, the consternation of Patrick Cooper when, at the beginning of the rehearsals, his masterpiece—for secretly, in the inmost recess of his heart, he considered *Lady Macbeth* as a masterpiece—appeared to him to be not only disorganized, but thoroughly rotten.

"Oh!" cried he silently, and his sufferings were all the more formidable as his vociferations were so very silent, "oh, why did I disobey my good mother? Why did I not follow the ideal career of an insurance broker? Why did I not foresee these shocking experiences? It is all horrible, appalling, awful!"

But later, when the aspect began to change, when the figures I had created took form, when the howlings, the shrieks, the screams became music, when I ceased shuddering and quaking as the hours of rehearsal approached—my confidence came back. I even surprised myself listening with pleasure to my music, and distinctly remember having thought at least at three occasions:

"Patrick, my dear, you are a splendid fellow after all. You ought not to have been so much impressed by the first seemingly

helpless trials of all these good people. How all has improved! There are few living composers, if any, able to conceive and to write such a score. And to think that the crowds will come and listen and applaud. But will they understand? Is the crowd sufficiently educated to appreciate my work? Do I not stain the beautiful conception of my fancy by submitting it to the crude judgment of the crowd? Still, a crowd it will be; they will come and listen and applaud. The theatre contains room for fifteen hundred people. There are about one hundred and fifty seats so bad that nobody will take them, but the remaining thirteen hundred and fifty will be occupied at every performance. Now, how many people will come and listen and applaud? Be modest, Patrick, old boy. Say twenty-five performances at an audience each of thirteen hundred and fifty. Makes?... makes?..."

I never knew, for I am bad at figures.

Altogether I was in high spirits, smiling like Sergeant Young before a battle. By the way, I do not know what has happened to Sergeant Young. He has seemed sulky since the other day, when he left me so

abruptly. It pains me, for he is my particular chum. And save what is needed to carry on he does not utter a single word to me.

But I must not let myself go into a diversion; I was speaking not of Sergeant Young but of myself and of my high spirits. Yet you must not believe that I was happy. I have already stated that I was altogether happy only during our performance in front of Schubert. That sentiment of perfect felicity never came back. And now, during the rehearsals of *Lady Macbeth* I was bitten by that "green-eyed monster, which doth mock the meat it feeds on": jealousy.

As I am quoting *Othello* I may as well say that the Cassio in my case was the pretty Lieutenant Franz von Heidenbrunn. I suppose that you have seen it coming a long time ago, and I have only to record how the green-eyed monster was hatched. No Jago was necessary for me, nor was there any handkerchief required.

The regiment in which the pretty officer held his high rank had been shifted from Salzburg to Brünn. This was a coincidence, and you will see a very unfortunate one for me.

Every morning, when there was a rehearsal, I went from Vienna to Brünn by the eight o'clock train which makes the journey in a little over an hour. I used to meet Mitzi at the Viennese Northern Station, and we travelled together, which rendered that hour as short as it was delightful. Rehearsals in Austria as in Germany begin at ten, and last from three to four hours. Afterwards we had lunch and then we returned by one of the numerous afternoon trains to Vienna.

Perhaps you wonder why I did not prefer to take up my quarters altogether in Brünn. Well, first there was that double journey which I would have lost, as well as the always pleasant company of my *fiancée*. And in the second place there was Brünn.

This town boasts of being the Austrian Birmingham. I will not hurt the feelings of my Birmingham readers, some of whom find their large and busy city a fine and charming place. If I don't share their taste entirely, it matters little. But Brünn! Brünn with its one inhabitant to Birmingham's ten! Brünn with its wide and empty roads in the new town, and with its narrow and crooked

streets in the old one! Brünn with its one and only beautiful building: the Jewish synagogue, and its one and only curiosity: the lunatic asylum! Brünn with its population of manufacturers—most worthy people no doubt, but with an interest only in buttons, hooks and eyes, pins, steel pins, cotton spinning and other kinds of engineering—Brünn was no place for me to enjoy myself in the least.

Nor was it any better for Franz von Heidenbrunn and his sister Augusta, who were both all the more bored with the place as the strict military regulations did not allow the lieutenant to spend even an occasional evening in Vienna. Their gratification at meeting Mitzi several times a week may easily be imagined. I will only say that when Mitzi and I lunched at the Grand Hotel, which is situated quite near the theatre, covers were generally laid for four. Of course, I was always allotted the Countess Augusta, who proved a rather insignificant girl, by whose side I remained unfathomably calm, while Mitzi seemed to enjoy the nuttish and, let me say it, silly conversation of her partner, which is, I

believe, a privilege of most lieutenants in Austria. I have, now, an idea that the talk was also carried on under the table—what do we keep feet for when dining?—but I was too well brought up by Daniel Cooper & Co. to investigate the nether world.

Slowly the poison entered my blood. "Trifles light as air are to the jealous confirmation strong." And soon I found myself burning as by "the mines of sulphur." (How good of Shakespeare to have provided me with all the terms necessary to describe my feelings.)

Had Mitzi been only my *fiancée,* I dare say that I would have put a rapid end to the matter. But she was also my *Lady Macbeth* in formation, and this could not be forgotten even for one moment. So I had to endure my secret sufferings. Besides, I must say, Mitzi was never as sweet to me as during these days. Full of hope and confidence, she always comforted and cheered me when I was disheartened, which happened more than once. Poor Doblana, who on his side was busy rehearsing *Aladdin,* had no such solace from her when he was dejected as, I am sure, most composers are every other day.

Our respective works were to be performed nearly at the same time, *Aladdin* only about ten days after *Lady Macbeth.*

At last the morning of the great day arrived. I must have given you a very wrong impression of Daniel Cooper if you do not know that he arrived the day before with mater. They were very pleased with Mitzi, although not a word was said about our betrothal. And Daniel Cooper was greatly amused by being called the "great Mr. Co-oper" by Doblana. It was on this occasion only that I found out that the good horn-player, who knew but few things save what belonged to horns and ballets, mixing up Insurance and Co-operation, had, when I first told him about my father's trade, thought that Daniel Cooper was the originator of Co-operative Societies.

What Dad spent on that memorable evening wants a special historian. I do not speak of his innumerable tips, nor of a basket of flowers which had to be transported to Brünn by the first Viennese florist in a specially hired motor lorry. I speak of such unexpected things as, for instance, a magnificent set of diamonds he presented to

my mother in remembrance of my coming triumph. Needless to say that mater, on his special order, was attired like a queen, and that Dad himself had a new dress suit; an old one would never have been judged worthy by him of listening to Patrick Cooper's music.

The house was not very full. Besides the one hundred and fifty seats which I had judged to be too bad, there were about another three hundred unoccupied, a fact which totally upset my unfinished calculations. However, it is well-known that in German and Austrian provincial towns first nights are not well attended, the general public being rather mistrustful. But all my friends of the Round Table and other acquaintances were present, and they did their *hand* work well. There was first—honour to whom honour is due—the *Herr Graf*, then old Hammer, on whose account I had been obliged to invent a special scheme so as to make him accept a railway ticket, for he would not have been able to come otherwise without imposing great privations upon himself, Doctor Bernheim, and even Giulay with his mother. Of course, Doblana

had made himself free in order to ascertain whether Miss Amizia Dobanelli was really the she-cat that walked miaowing over the boards. And he must have been deceived if he expected such a thing, for hers was an unparallelled triumph.

Quite a lot of theatrical managers, from that of the Vienna Opera downwards, had been invited, but only one, that of the Graz municipal theatre had come.

The performance was good, as performances in Germany and even more in Austria generally are. I am not afraid to state that a third-rate theatre, as, for instance, that of Brünn, would be ashamed of most of our conventional society performances at the Royal Theatre Covent Garden, in spite of all the stars. Confound the stars, who can never be brought to a complete, harmonious agreement, who sing their parts each for his or her own sake, and never think for one moment of the work and its meaning.

From what I have told already, you may have conjectured how very necessary such harmonious ensemble playing was in my *Lady Macbeth*. It was not a loud opera, and I could expect that the critics would not

reproach me with being too noisy in my orchestration. Indeed, it was found too soft by those gentlemen, who never are satisfied. They did not understand that this softness was required for the general atmosphere of my opera.

The chief difficulty had been with the baritone Hetmann, who sang *Macbeth*. I had great trouble in explaining him why he was never to give full voice during the whole evening.

Macbeth must not appear at the beginning as a criminal. He is first a courageous and truthful man. But he is a dreamer. "*Look, how our partner's rapt,*" says Banquo. He is a dreamer who struggles against the image of his phantasy. Nearly all he says is aside. His reserve, his taciturnity are awful. Whatever he speaks, must be uttered as though against his own will. Berlioz, once, to obtain a very tragic effect, had a drum covered with a cloth. Macbeth must be spoken with a voice resembling the sound of such a drum. Nor must he talk aloud in the banquet scene with the ghost, where on the contrary he ought to become entirely benumbed. He is not with-

out feelings, he speaks warmly of King Duncan, and he loves his wife, knowing how much he needs her.

That performance of *Lady Macbeth* was for me and, I think, for some of the spectators, a foreshadowing of new times in the operatic art. It was a unique, incessant horror for the audience as long as the fearful score lasted—and it became the most attractive scandal for all the people who search in art nothing but the baseness they find in every day life.

My opera is but a short one, taking two hours to perform. Therefore no necessity arose anywhere for pressing the movement. Bischoff, who had staged it, had obtained most wonderful effects. The singers seemed to be going through the nightmare in which they had a part. Scene after scene seemed to shake with dread and terror. Bischoff knew how to produce the biggest effects with small means. Thus I will never forget that there was a sort of small lamp burning during the scene of the murder. The trembling flame, now more reddish, now more bluish, was flaring all the time. At the precise moment when the murder was

supposed to occur in the wings a sudden squall nearly extinguished the light, and for a couple of seconds all became dark; but in the next instant the flame seemed bigger, redder than ever and sooty. It was frightful.

The prologue, namely, the scene of the witches and that where Macbeth wins the title of Thane of Cawdor, went well. After this, while the scenery was being built for the first act, Macbeth's castle at Inverness, the orchestra played my paraphrase of the "Pibroch o' Donuil Dhu,' the only vigorous and energetic part of my score. Then the real thing began, for only then Lady Macbeth appeared.

Whatever I may say of her, will not render justice to her incomparable performance. Nobody could have resisted this Lady Macbeth. Even when she had to deliver a reproach, she did it trembling with love. And as Bischoff and I had taught her, she seemed to shudder at her hard, fearful words.

She never seemed to sing, but to whisper, to inspire with the means of the sweetest seduction. She turned round her Macbeth,

embraced him, clung to him so that sometimes they seemed to be but one being with two souls. How she sang all the hideousness and atrocity of her part—how she perfumed the blood of her words with sweetest promises! She was what we had asked her to be—more a spoiled child, who foolishly craves for evil, than a heartless criminal.

There was some applause after that act, but the public seemed awed, so intense was the impression. As I was hurrying to the stage, I met dad.

"Oh, my boy!" said he and pressed both my hands so hard that I thought he would break them. His eyes were shining and I could swear that there were tears in them. That "Oh, my boy!" is the one beautiful memory I have of that evening.

The next minute saw me at the door of Mitzi's dressing room. I knocked.

"Who is it?" asked a voice, not Mitizi's, but that of a woman I did not know.

I gave my name. There was some whispering inside which I could indistinctly perceive through the door, and then a woman came out, opening the door so little that I

could not even have a peep at the inside.

"*Fräulein* regrets," said the woman, as if I had been a mere stranger, "she cannot see you now."

One is above all the son of one's country. I daresay no Englishman would have acted otherwise than I did. I bowed to that dressing woman as if she had been a noble lady and went on to the stage.

There I found the manager of the theatre chatting with his Graz colleague. They both congratulated me, and the manager of the Graz theatre complained about the coldness of the public.

"You will find no such frosty people in the south, in Graz," he told me, "for if you are willing to let me have your opera at the same terms as the ones you have here, I will play it within two months. I should be pleased if I could secure Miss Dobanelli for the part of the Lady."

You may conceive how pleased I was and how warmly I thanked him for such encouragement. But the entre-acte being nearly over we had to leave the stage.

My way back to the audience led me past Mitzi's dressing room. Just as I was

going by, the door opened and... Franz von Heidenbrunn came out. I thought that my heart was going to stop. So Mitzi had received him, while her door had remained closed for me. I went on as in a dream.

Before the door of his box I found dad and the mater.

"What has happened?" asked my old Daniel Cooper & Co. "Why are you so pale?"

I was not going to spoil his pleasure.

"I am probably a little excited," I answered. "And the manager of the Graz theatre has just accepted the opera."

"That is splendid!" cried dad.

"Does he pay well?" asked the mater.

"That's the boy's affair," grumbled Daniel Cooper, turning to her. "You mind your own business."

A bell rang, and dad and my mother went into their box, while I hurried back to my seat.

During the whole act of the banquet I could not find my senses. What was I to do with Mitzi? I could not possibly ignore the incident. I asked myself whether she was not too much an artist to be a wife.

What, if frivolity were unavoidable in the dramatic art, the most corporal and difficult of all, but the only one in which woman could grow up to the highest genius?

These doubts spoiled the second act for me. Yet I saw how lovingly she was stroking Macbeth's forehead, like a nurse who would cool the burning brow of a sick man. I saw, too, how she smiled at the ghost, how she mocked him, and I heard how she sang the words: "*What, quite unmanned in folly?*" and afterwards: "*Fie, for shame!*" exactly as I had taught her, slowly, softly, and more like a warning than a reproach.

There was even less applause after the second act than the first. However, Doctor Bernheim, whom you know as a sensible, judicious man, came and heartily congratulated me.

"In this particular case," he said, "the success cannot be measured from the applause. The public is much too moved to applaud loudly. Instinctively they fear to destroy the atmosphere."

I did not go on the stage after this act. I was afraid lest I should meet Mitzi and say one word too many.

The last act began, and soon the famous sleep-walking scene arrived. Never before had the ruin of a poor, over-burdened heart been acted thus.

She came.

At once I noticed that she was not dressed as she had been the day before at the dress rehearsal, when she had worn a long night-gown. She came like a child, with bare feet and bare legs—there was just then the craze of dancers who appeared like that—tripping full of anguish... not in a night-gown, but in a chemise... looking tortured, deceived, broken, a child vanquished in a fight which was too much for her.

And with a voice more gentle, soft, and lovely than anything which I ever heard, she began. Sweet as the singing of a breeze her voice vibrated through the soundless, trembling audience.

"*Yet here's a spot.*"

How she wept after the words: "*Yet who would have thought the old man to have had so much blood in him?*"

And later: "*All the perfumes of Arabia will not sweeten this little hand. Oh, oh, oh!*" How she whined these three oh's! The

audience pitied her. And how helpless she looked, with her poor, naked legs, in her poor chemise...

Then... then, when she had said the words: "*To bed—to bed,*" there came a musical afterpiece in which I once more repeated all the motives of the opera, including the lullaby. Mitzi was slowly to turn round and to remain there with her taper—showing her back to the audience and advancing only one step from time to time.

She had been rehearsing it with a long, flowing night-gown; and now she was standing there in that short chemise. She had dared that! And to my horror I saw that it was transparent, very transparent even, and tight, and that it outlined the contours of...

There! I am once more in difficulty. You, chaste reader, who have accompanied me through these pages, have surely noticed my struggles at different times to find the right expression for... you know what I mean. And this time I feel truly awkward because I have reached an important point. I must find a name for that lovely *it,* which had seduced me from the very first moment I had

seen her, for *it* was pretty, so pretty, quite bewitching.

Ah, Barrie! Thou who has invented that charming name "Little Mary" for something which was as difficult to baptize, help me... help me to find a name for it... for that darling... for that double darling!

Double Darling?

Barrie! Did this idea come from thee?

I'll name it Double Darling, but being shy, I'll write only D. D.

Well, I have explained that I was horror-stricken. This, I must confess, is a lie. I felt no horror at all, on the contrary. The truth is that the attractive sight made me forget my anger, my dejection. She did look fascinating, and the wicked thing knew it. She knew that she was bewitching and was sure that she risked nothing by showing her D. D.

Nor did she fail in her bold venture. When a minute or so later she disappeared in the background, and at the same time the curtain was slowly closed, a storm of applause broke forth as I never had imagined.

Again and again Mitzi had to bow before

the public, although she disappointed it somewhat by appearing hidden in a light dressing-gown. But the wanton people had had their sensation, they applauded and shouted, and it reached a degree of real paroxysm when dad's immense basket of flowers was carried on the stage.

But the louder the noise was, the more did I understand that nothing of it was meant for me, for my work. It was not *Lady Macbeth* over which the public rejoiced, it was Mitzi's D. D.

I heard the people talk. There was not one word for the misery of Lady Macbeth, her sighs and her struggles and her wretchedness. The crowd will never recognize the nobility of suffering. No, they spoke of La Dobanelli... La Dobanelli in her little chemise. The D. D. had been an event.

And the same thing occurred at the next performances. Only that on the first night the audience had been shaking with terror, and that the following times it was shaking with sensation... or with deception, for many people left the theatre with words of regret:

"Oh—it was not so wicked as all that!"

The snobs of the town fell in love with La Dobanelli by the dozen. One out of each dozen was struck by the sweetness of her voice, by her sublime acting, by her power of remaining lovable even in crime—the other eleven were in love with the D. D.

Anyhow, when we all met half an hour after the end of the performance at the Grand Hotel there was much joy in the air. Dad was offering to my friends a superb supper in honour of my first night—and they were all present, you bet.

I asked mater how she had enjoyed my opera.

"Oh, it's very pretty," she said. "I like the lullaby very much."

And that was all.

Father, on the other hand, was overflowing with enthusiasm. These two were always the same, never had they the same opinion on anything. Yet, there was one point on which they seemed to agree... perhaps because not one word was pronounced on it. But their eyes seemed to implore me silently:

"You will not marry that woman, Pat!"

I felt very uneasy. But I am a sport. I bore it all in a decent way. Yet I thanked God when the moment came for the parents to leave. Business had allowed dad to take only a very few days vacation, and they were returning the same night via Dresden and Cologne to England.

It was a happy necessity, for thus they escaped the critcisms of the next morning.

I will divulge you the mildest:

"The two Shakespearian birds of prey were served us yesterday as a dish which was neither fish nor flesh, concocted by our great actor Mr. Bischoff, and accompanied by a *sauce anglaise* prepared at a Worcestershire (or is it a Yorkshire?) manufacture by a certain Patrick Cooper, who has—unfortunately—nothing in common with Fennimore. But he has a wealthy father, a London shopkeeper in the City, and a mother who advertised yesterday her descent from a jeweller's family.

"There is not much to say about the insignificant Cooperian music, except perhaps that no other living composer would have conceived and written such a score.

As for the libretto, it is the mistake of an intelligent man who has treated the subject not from the immortal poet's dramatic point of view, but shortsightedly from that of the actor. Mr. Bischoff only forgot that Shakespeare, too, was somebody, after all.

"Mr. Hetmann was a pale, voiceless Macbeth, and had it not been for the débutante of the evening, Miss Amizia Dobanelli, the performance would have been a total fiasco. She played and sang the Lady with charm as well as with energy. But we think that a part as *La Belle Hélène* would suit her particular talent better than the ambitious Lady."

Is it not a blessing that dad is an Englishman educated on such thoroughly English lines that he knows no foreign language? Blessed are the poor in education, for theirs is the kingdom of ignorance.

XI.

SURPRISING as it may seem to you, I had the courage, the next day, to take the bull by the horns and to ask Mitzi about Franz von Heidenbrunn. She merely laughed.

"My dear," she said, "firstly I am your fiancée, and as such must be very careful with you. Secondly, Franz is my cousin, and we have known each other for so many years that we are like brother and sister. Lastly, you knocked on my door at an awkward moment, when I was changing my dress. You did not want me to show myself to you in my underwear, did you? While Franz came three minutes later when I was dressed again."

You go and argue with a woman if you can. I could not. I just felt silly. And I suppose I looked it. For she came near me and stroked my cheek gently.

"Don't make a face, dear," she said. "I quite understand your feeling miserable after having read the papers; but, never mind, it will wear off..."

"I know, Mitzi," I answered meekly, "I cannot have it both ways, and write an opera that pleases us both, and the critics too."

And there was no more discussion about Franz von Heidenbrunn. Our talk shifted, and I was informed, too late, alas! that the Austrian critic, as well as the German, is always prepared to write favourably for a consideration, being hardly paid at all by the newspapers themselves, and regards as his legitimate victims such people who have not made backsheesh arrangements in advance.

On the third day *Lady Macbeth* was repeated. This time the house was packed full, even the hundred and fifty bad seats were sold out. The question whether La Dobanelli was wearing tights or not under her chemise had been discussed in the whole town, and had proved such an irresistible attraction that at her first appearance she was greeted with warm applause.

Franz von Heidenbrunn was again in the audience. Whether he visited Mitzi in the entre-acte I cannot say—I did not, having no desire to be turned away again.

I also went to see the third performance, which was exactly like the second one. The same kind of audience, thirsting for a sensation, and for the third time Franz von Heidenbrunn among the spectators.

As we travelled back to Vienna, Mitzi and I, we had a few words about her chemise in the last scene.

"Was this the same chemise you had the two first times?" I asked her.

"No," she replied laughing, "you do expect a lady to put fresh linen on from time to time, don't you?"

"That chemise was shorter than the other," I remarked, more sternly than I had intended to.

"Oh! An inch or two perhaps."

"An inch is much in those latitudes," I jested.

"Look here, Patrick," she answered sullenly. "Let me alone with your remonstrances. You ought to know by now that I do my best for your opera, which would

have been a complete failure without me."

She said it coldly, heartlessly. It made me suffer. But, swallowing my torment, I answered nothing, and we continued our journey in silence. I felt that we were not getting on at all nicely and wondered how I was to educate her to be less of an artist, —and more my wife.

* * * *

There is in drama a certain system of construction, as you ought to know. Probably you don't, still there is. First comes the exposition, then the opening of the action, then the growth during which it grows (of course) to the climax; then the fall or, as it must sometimes be called, the return which precedes the close. In life the return which follows all climaces is always nasty, and you wake up after every excitement with a bit of a moral headache. Hoping is an ungrateful business. Look, for instance, at our friend Cotton, our good Guncotton. He has finished his chemistry treatise—think what it means to have written all these formulas in the trenches—and

he has this very morning received the news that his manuscript has arrived safely in London. Now he walks about, his eyes full of rosy dreams, of fears, and of hopes. And I can so well understand his feelings, his thoughts. Patrick Cooper went through all these emotions. And afterwards, dear me! Only my case was a worse one, for the devil had amused himself in mixing the poison of love into my adventure of artistic hopes and ambitions.

And by the way, as I am talking of the devil, it occurs to me that the little man with the tuft of black beard on his chin, who appeared to me four times, must have been... HE. He laughed, the evil fellow, when he came for the fourth time and saw that his matchmaking work was seemingly accomplished.

Yet lately I had not seen him again. He must have been busy somewhere else. Perhaps will you see a connexion between his disappearance and the following events.

The fourth performance of *Lady Macbeth* coincided with the *première* of Doblana's *Aladdin* at the Viennese Opera. I thought it was my duty to be present at

the day of honour of my master, a small sacrifice indeed, as there was not much joy for me in attending my own opera before an injudicious public, which really came only to see Amizia Dobanelli in her chemise. Besides, as the opera was making money, there was every prospect of more performances taking place.

When I expressed my intention to Doblana and to Mitzi the horn-player at once objected. I could very well go and see the dress rehearsal of *Aladdin* instead of the first night.

I asked why I should be deprived of attending the performance.

"I do not like the idea," said Doblana, "of Mitzi being alone in Brünn. I cannot accompany her on that particular evening, but I think that you, her fiancée, ought not to neglect her."

"Good Lord!" exclaimed Mitzi, "Am I not old enough to remain alone for one evening? If I am such a child, then surely you will not consider Patrick grown up either. He is but one year older than I."

"How will you manage?" asked her father.

"I think I will stay the night at the hotel."

"I do not think that it befits a young lady to stay a night alone at an hotel."

"All right, then I will go and stay with Augusta."

Doblana acquiesced. But this time I made an objection.

"Augusta," I said, "will be in Vienna on that particular evening; she will want to see *Aladdin*."

Mitzi glanced at me with an angry look.

"Anyhow," she protested, "Franz will have no leave. He will be in Brünn."

"That is just what I object to," I declared. "The best thing would be for you to return to Vienna. I will be at the Northern Station to bring you home."

This was finally decided upon, and Mitzi left us in the afternoon for Brünn. At six o'clock there came a wire from her addressed to Doblana, just as he and I were about to leave for the theatre.

It ran:

"*Safely arrived. House full. Best luck to Papa. Mitzi.*"

An hour and a half later *Aladdin* began.

When you write your reminiscences, as I am doing now, you will be supposed to talk of other people. You will see how difficult it is. I always want to talk about myself. I remember things only inasmuch they concern me. Other people's feelings are not half as important to me as my own. Thus, that evening, at the beginning they were so intensely bitter, that I think I must record them, although Doblana was the hero of the day. I was, naturally enough, reminded of my own first night ten days before. But while *Lady Macbeth* had been played before an unsatisfactorily filled house, the one to-day was packed. All the imaginable beautiful and jewelled ladies were present, while at Brünn the provincial simplicity of the feminine public (the male part is about everywhere the same) was so exaggerated, that my poor mater's diamonds were, as you have seen, thought worthy of a newspaper notice. Whoever was of importance in Vienna, political and military people, financiers, diplomatists, and artists, was to be found on that first night. One hardly noticed that the great Court Box was empty, and that no Royalty was present; for all

the other noted members of Society had come. I will confess that I felt jealous. And this jealousy increased as the orchestra started playing Doblana's music.

Oh, what an orchestra! We have a few fine orchestras in London, but how much superior are the Vienna Philharmonics. Neither Munich, nor Dresden, can boast of such artists. To hear one's music performed by them must be heaven.

Such then were my feelings as *Aladdin* began. Who would have thought that a couple of hours later my sentiments would be reversed and that instead of envying Doblana, I would pity the poor fellow?

I had seen the ballet at different rehearsals. *Joseph Dorff's* book was clever, Doblana's music pretty, tuneful and well scored, although in no way remarkable, and the staging simply marvellous. There is no Parisian nor Russian ballet which can compete with those of the Vienna Opera. Not only are the dancers and mimics incomparable, but fortunes are spent on the scenery and the costumes, which are proofs of the most perfect theatrical taste.

The first act was placed before and

inside the famous cavern where Aladdin finds the lamp. In the original tale this cavern is uninhabited, but in the ballet there were populations of pretty spirits and servants of the lamp. These gave a pretext for all sorts of charming dances. And there was one dance which had a real success, namely, that of the precious stones. It was performed by small girls dressed as rubies, emeralds, sapphires and so on, who formed lovely groups representing the different jewels. The whole had a kaleïdoscopic effect, changing from one second to the next, and was uncommonly pleasant.

Yet this was nothing in comparison to what was to come in the second and third act. In the former there was the magnificent arrival of Aladdin at the Sultan's court. He came on a splendid white charger and was accompanied by forty white and forty black slaves, who afterwards showed all the skill taught by the Viennese dancing masters. In the last act there came the *pièce de résistance,* namely, the building before the eyes of the public, not in one night, but in ten minutes, of Aladdin's unique palace. Things of such kind are

very easy to be done in fairy tales and not much more difficult on a stage when the manager disposes of unlimited wealth. All the wonders of the Arabian Nights were to be presented to the audience on that evening.

The first act had gone well, better even than anybody had expected. There are usually but short entre-acts in the Vienna Opera. But first nights, especially of Grand Ballets, are such social events that they do not admit this rule in all its rigour. Therefore nobody was surprised when the entre-acte instead of the usual ten minutes had lasted twenty. Groups had been chatting and laughing and showing their toilettes and jewels. But in the end everybody had left the *foyer* and returned to the seats. Yet nothing happened. The musicians were at their places, but no conductor was present. Ten more minutes passed. The public gave signs of impatience, a thing unheard of in this *sanctissimum*. But these signs of impatience lasted one instant only. Then the house became painfully silent.

I should have liked to go and see behind the curtain what had happened. But this was not a provincial theatre where such visits

from the public to the stage could be permitted. In this Imperial and Royal Court theatre there were strict rules; and I could only wait with the other people.

The wildest rumours began to spread. The amount of improbabilities human brains can invent in a few minutes is incredible. And here two and a half thousand were busy finding the extraordinary reason of this long pause.

Yet as inventive as their brains were, they proved no match for the reality. For after three-quarters of an hour, which seemed an interminably long time, a bell was heard, and a gentleman in evening dress appeared before the curtain. He was sickly pale.

"Ladies and gentlemen," he said, "I have much regret in announcing that the further performance of the ballet *Aladdin* has been forbidden by all-highest order. The money for purchased seats will be refunded to-morrow in exchange of the coupons of the tickets."

The announcement had the effect of a thunderstorm, putting an end to the suspense of the last minutes. I could not say what

was greater, consternation, regret for the composer, disorder among the discontented spectators, or curiosity to know the secret reason of this catastrophe.

For my part I left the theatre as quickly as possible and went to the little side door in the Opera Street, at the rear of the premises, where Doblana was wont to leave. There was already a terrific crowd. But although I had (I have no more) the soft fingers and delicate hands of a pianist, I possess also the strong elbows of an English sportsman, and I succeeded in reaching the door. Just at that moment a man came out of the house. He looked pale, haggard, with the expression of a drunkard. It was Doblana.

He scarcely recognised me, but I pushed my arm under his and led him away.

It was cold and foggy.

I shivered as I asked him what had happened.

"It is the Archduke," he stammered, "who has forbidden the performance."

There was something like a sob in his voice.

"The Archduke? His own work? Why?"

"I don't know myself."

After a few steps made in a painful silence, he added:

"We had a little difference yesterday, at the dress rehearsal, but nothing of importance."

"What was it?"

"He wanted to cancel the dance of the precious stones, saying that it was like a *kindergarten* that had gone mad."

"And?"

"Well, I objected to such a cut and said: 'Nonsense, *Herr Graf.*' Thereupon he sat down, pronouncing not another word more."

"And what did he do to-day?"

"He did nothing. He did not even come. During the first act a letter from the First Master of Ceremonies was delivered, saying that he forbade the performance to go on."

"But how is it possible to treat the public in this way?"

"Oh, the public!"

He shrugged his shoulders and went on explaining:

"They are not supposed to be regular

spectators as in an ordinary theatre. They are the guests of the Emperor, and they, as it were, buy an invitation to assist at the performance, which is in reality supposed to be given not for the general public, but for the private pleasure of His Majesty."

"And was there nothing to be done?"

"We have tried, that is why we had to keep the audience waiting so long. The conductor hurried to the First Master of Ceremonies, and the Manager to His Majesty himself, while I drove to the palace of the Archduke. I was not received at all, nor did the manager see the Emperor, and as for the conductor, he was told by the First Master of Ceremonies that he regretted, but had to obey orders."

Instinctively, we had taken the direction of the Karlsgasse. I had a very nasty feeling, as if poor, innocent Doblana had suddenly become a criminal, and I his accomplice. I was dazed as if I had had a smack in the face.

We were passing a large café near the Elisabeth Bridge, where Doblana and I sometimes used to meet some friends.

"Let us go in," I said, "and show your

self publicly. Make the best out of a bad case. After all you are innocent of the disaster that has befallen you. Go in, there are surely a few journalists inside. Let yourself be interviewed and protest against the manner you have been treated."

You ought to have seen the terror in the poor man's face. He opened his eyes, his nostrils, his mouth and drew backwards his lower jaw as if he had wanted to swallow it. (As a matter of fact, he must have been starving, for he had had no food the whole day.)

"Protest!" he cried at last. "I?—Mr. Co-oper, you desire my death. As if my situation was not sufficiently bad! This is not a free country like yours, where you can talk as you like. No! I have but one thing to do, to go home and hide myself. I am done for."

And so we went to the Karlsgasse. The house seemed desolate to me. The servant, Fanny's unworthy successor, believing that we would sup outside and come home late, had gone to bed. So I proceeded into the dreary kitchen (a kitchen without a cook is always dreary, and without fire it can drive

you to desperation) and made some tea on the gas-stove, while Doblana who had lit a cigar was walking up and down in the *salon*.

"It is terrible," said he at last, after he had swallowed a little tea, "how Austria is changing. What happens to me is but an instance of the new spirit that reigns here. Or should I not call it otherwise? This spirit, which comes from Berlin, this Pangermanic spirit is not a new spirit, but a reactionary spirit, a dark, mediæval spirit, a spirit that recognizes no right, but only might. What this Archduke has done to me to-day, in our time of enlightenment, is nothing else than an act of mediæval brutality.

"All evil comes us from Berlin. It spoils our art, it spoils our music. What they call the higher form is simply amorphous. What they call deep ideas is empty commonplace. The motives which are behind it all are vicious, sensual, degenerate, disgusting depravity. What we see in their painting, figures now too long, now too short, with swollen abdomens, with grinning faces, we find in their music, in the grossness of their motives, in the brutality of their

orchestrations. This music is a breath from a stinking morass.

"And this is not all. Berlin is so mediæval in its views that they want war, universal war. War which will give the death blow to Austrian music, for music does not live in times of war. Fifty years ago they said: Germany for the Germans! Now they are crying: the world for the Prussians! And as though Austria were a German state, as though there were no Slavs and no Italians in Austria, Berlin wants to drag us into her war schemes. And they will succeed. From our cruel paintings you can see it, from our coarse, frightful music you can hear it: they will succeed!"

Thus spoke Doblana, not a great prophet, no, only a humble musician. Do not believe, incredulous reader, that I make him utter a prophesy after the event. Nay! These words were actually spoken, a long time before anybody, before even he who spoke them, thought of the war, that war in which I am fighting, that war which, as in irony, Austria, gentle, joyous, dancing Austria began.

I looked at my watch, and suddenly I

remembered that I was to meet Mitzi at the Northern Station. It was very late, perhaps too late. Still by making haste I might arrive in time. So I speedily went away. But as it is always when you are in a hurry, the taxi took a long, circuitous route, what they call a short cut, and I arrived too late. The train had arrived nearly ten minutes ago, and I could find no trace of Mitzi at the station.

Heaven knows what gave me the idea that something was wrong. When I came back to the Karlsgasse, I saw the light in the windows of the *salon* as they had been when I had left. I ascended the stairs and rang the bell. Nearly at once I heard Doblana's dragging step, who came to open the door.

"Alone?" he cried, in a state of utmost anxiety.

Mitzi had not arrived.

The nervousness of the poor man was terrible. Exhausted as he was I did not dare to leave him, and I passed with him the worst night of my life. I have only to think of it to find any night in the trenches, amidst the roaring of the shells, restful by comparison.

At the earliest hour in the morning we went to a telephone office where we asked for communication with the Grand Hotel in Brünn. After a long half-hour we got through, only to learn that *Fräulein* had not been seen on the previous day at the hotel.

We tried the theatre. The one thing we heard was that she had been very successful as always and had left immediately after the performance.

We returned to the Karlsgasse. Mitzi had not arrived. Only the postman had called and brought several letters. None of them being from her, Doblana threw them carelessly into his pocket and asked me whether I was coming with him to Brünn. Of course, I acquiesced. But I will confess that I, so to say, made a condition of our having some breakfast before. It may be that youth is more hungry, but I could not go on without food.

At last we sat in the train. We had more than an hour before us.

Mechanically Doblana looked through his letters, passing them silently to me. The first was an invoice for flowers he had offered the evening before to several dancers.

The second was one of good Hammer, written immediately after the interrupted performance in very warm words, taking part in the sorrow that had befallen his friend.

The third was from the publisher. But I could not read it to the end, for Doblana, who was perusing the fourth one, suddenly uttered a stifled cry.

The letter was from the Archduke.

"My dear collaborator, my worthy Mr. Doblana," (it ran about—I do not recollect the exact words—), "I have taken my revenge. You have treated my dear wife like the basest of women, only because the chief of my family had prohibited my marrying her. Your behaviour was an unforgettable insult to the best, the most deserving and amiable woman, in whom you have seen nothing but a despicable, venal dancer. You have continued your disdain, your hatred beyond the tomb. What I have done is my retaliation.

"It is I who have taken away from your house and destroyed your *Griseldis*. It is I who have prohibited the per-

formance of your *Aladdin,* knowing that I would hit you in your weakest spot, your ambition. And I may as well tell you that, while you may keep your position as a horn-player at the Opera, its doors are henceforth closed to the composer Doblana.

"You need not worry about the cost of the production at the Opera. I have made good the damage my vengeance has occasioned.

"As for you, I do not wish that it should cause you any pecuniary loss. The idea of having harmed my former collaborator in this paltry way would be unpleasant to me. I put the value of *Griseldis* and *Aladdin* at 25.000 crowns each and enclose therefore a cheque for 50.000 crowns to indemnify you.

"ALPHONS HECTOR."

I cannot describe the wrath of my poor friend. And I had to struggle with him to prevent him from tearing the cheque to pieces. And this may give you the measure of his indignation. For you know how great was his love of money.

I should like to state that the Archduke had moreover shown himself wrong in two points. Ambition was not Doblana's weakest spot, it was precisely money. Nor was Alphons Hector's prediction right, for two years later an opera of Doblana's composition was successfully produced at the Viennese Opera.

As for the Archduke, or the *Herr Graf,* or *Joseph Dorff,* however you may call him, he completely disappeared a few days after the memorable *Aladdin* night. Some say that he undertook a journey on his yacht, and that it was lost with all hands. Other people think that he has settled down to a private life somewhere in South America. In any case he was nevermore heard of.

But to resume my story. All researches in Brünn as afterwards in Vienna did not succeed in finding Mitzi. The only clue we obtained (it was from Augusta von Heidenbrunn that we got it) was the fact that her brother Franz had disappeared together with my fiancée. He had, for her sake, become a deserter.

A few weeks went by, which I passed nearly without interruption on Doblana's

side. He slowly recovered from the awful shock this whole affair had caused him. Then I proceeded to Graz to assist at the performance of *Lady Macbeth* in this town. Without Mitzi, without her overwhelming talent, without her charm it was bound to be a failure. And I came back to Vienna more discouraged, more disheartened than ever. Again I saw much of Doblana, and I can assure you that we were a pretty pair of dejected composers. On this subject I could write pages, but out of pity for you I won't.

One day, as we sat there smoking, and pondering silently over our shattered hopes, the bell rang. We heard the maid opening the door, and in the next minute Mitzi entered. She was dressed exactly as I had last seen her, but her features were drawn, she was pale and seemed to have suffered. In this moment I swore that I would avenge her, if ever I could, of the scoundrel who had brought her to this.

She had stopped at the door. We had both, Doblana and I, risen in a violent surprise. During an unterminable minute no word was spoken. Then, at last, she whispered piteously:

"Father!"

And as no answer came she said:

"Patrick, I have come back."

Again there was that gloomy, cruel silence. And suddenly we saw her fall down crying, sobbing, shaking. Then her father approached her and lifted her up. He did it with infinite gentleness, but he said no word.

My dear reader, you are perhaps a sentimental person and you will, may be, condemn your old friend Patrick for not having made the movement which her father made. But you see...

A few days before I had read William J. Locke's novel *The Morals of Marcus Ordeyne,* one of the most brilliant and delightful this wonderful writer has achieved. There was a certain analogy in Mitzi's return and in that of Carlotta. Like her she came back empty handed, having also probably pawned everything. It was heart-breaking, and like Marcus I felt faint. Perhaps, if I had spoken one single word at that moment everything would have happened otherwise. However, my morals are not the morals of Marcus Ordeyne—and that one word, I spoke it not.

Slowly her father led her into her room. I used the moment to slip out of the house. I went to my lodgings, nearly mad, and packed my things. The same evening saw me on my way to England, never to go back.

XII.

IT is a very funny feeling I experience in returning to these pages. I had left them since the first of May, when I wrote the last words of Chapter XI., and you will have noticed that several points remained unsolved. In this state my MS. had rested during six weeks, mostly because I did not know how to fill the gaps. But since yesterday things having changed, Fate with a capital F has added another chapter to my story.

You must know that we are getting ready for a great attack. As far as we can ascertain we are going in a few days to leave the trenches where we have been living cosily for so many months. Of course, you wonder; feeling snug in the trenches is somewhat unexpected. Yet it is true. And now the unceasing bombardment tells us: "We shall have to be going." Can you believe that it fills us with a sort of regret?

Yesterday at noon Charlie calls Cotton, Pringle, and me.

"My boys," he says, "the colonel has just had a bit of a chat with me. He wants four volunteers—three men and me—to go to-night and reconnoitre a certain place. I have thought of you three, but I had better tell you: it's not without danger, far from it."

"We're here," says I, "to do our duty."

"We'll have some fun, anyhow," declares Pringle.

And Guncotton adds:

"My manuscript is safely in London. I don't care."

I record this conventicle lest you should think that such resolutions are taken as in opera, where the four men would advance to each other and, uniting their four right hands in one single grip, sing a quartette.

"All right," says Charlie, "so long!"

He is about to go, but I recall him.

"Can I have a minute with you, Sergeant?"

"Ten. What's the matter?"

"There is a chance of our not coming back to-night?"

"Are you funky?"

"Charlie, I haven't deserved this. You know that I won't shirk."

"Well, what is it then?"

"It is... it is simply that for some time you are changed towards me, you've been sulky, and I should not like to go off on the long journey without having made friends with you again."

He says nothing and stares into my face. Then after a while he asks:

"Have you written any more of that stuff?"

"What stuff?"

"That story of yours."

"Oh, I see. Yes. I have."

"Let's see."

I show him my story. He reads quickly, very quickly, skipping half-pages; in short, he reads as I should not like you, for instance, to read it. In less than half-an-hour he has run through all the pages. When he has finished he takes a long breath as though he felt relieved.

"Look here, P. C.," he says, "when you began that story I thought it was all stuff and nonsense. It amused me, and some-

times I thought that you knew how to strike a note of sincerity."

(I earnestly wish to point out that this kind of criticism is not my own; I guarantee that it is by Sergeant Young.)

He goes on:

"Very slowly it began to dawn upon me that there might be more truth in your narrative than I had first suspected. And then you let me see that photo."

He stops and looks at me as if at a loss how to go on.

"I had misunderstood what your story was driving at," he continues, "I thought that, as stories written in a light tone generally do, it was to finish with a marriage... and, when I found out that it was a story which had really happened, I believed that you had married the lady of the photograph."

My dear reader, I promise you that I will repeat it no more after this time, but I must ask your leave to inform you once more that I felt silly. And I continued so when Charlie declared:

"I have known that woman."

"You have known her?"

"Oh!" he cries, "do not suspect anything wrong, do not jump to conclusions. Do you want to know how it all happened? By a lucky deal on the Paris *Bourse* I had realized a sum of about 200.000 francs. I never told you, that I used to live in Paris, after the Boer war, years ago. Never mind. Well, with my money I did a very foolish thing: I bought a little hotel. It was called 'The Grand-duke's hotel,' and was a smart place. Unfortunately, to keep a smart custom, you must advertize, and for this I had no money. Perhaps also to make a good innkeeper a certain talent is necessary, in which I was lacking. By and by my business declined, not in elegance, but in turnover. Still, there were always a few refined and well-paying guests who encouraged me to hope against hope. But one day—you know the date as well as I, P. C.—there came a couple who gave the concern its death stroke.

"They travelled under the name *Count and Countess Dorff,* but from the photograph alone I could tell you, that the lady was your Mitzi. However, there is another thing which coincides with your account. Not

that they called themselves *Dorff* from the Archduke's *nom de plume,* I do not mean that, I mean another thing.

"On the ninth or tenth day after their arrival they came home rather early and at once retired to their apartment. Shortly afterwards George, my head waiter, came hurriedly into my private room, where I was working, and informed me that they were quarrelling—but so violently that I had better come. I am sorry, P. C., to have to show you an ugly side of an otherwise honourable trade, but eaves-dropping is sometimes necessary to an innkeeper. So I went and listened, At first I could hardly understand what they were saying, for although I speak German as perfectly as six other languages, I could not immediately make out their peculiar Viennese accent. Soon, however, I grew accustomed to it. The quarrel was apparently about money matters. Quarrels between couples in hotels generally are. But after a while the object of the dispute seemed to shift, they grew louder and then fainter again. Through the door of the next room, where I was listening, I could hear one of the two people excitedly

opening a trunk and searching for something. Then I heard the woman say distinctly in an irritated voice :

'So your father took the papers?'

And the man answered :

'He did.'

'He stole the score of *Griseldis*? How did he do it?'

'He had only to step into your apartment, which a locksmith had opened for him. He knew the room, he knew the very drawer where the manuscript was kept, and he took it.'

"There came several questions from the woman which I don't remember, evidently asking how the Archduke had prepared the whole affair.

'He had obtained an engagement for your father,' explained the man, 'to play a concerto in Prague. He knew that this would cause him to be absent for three days. You had told Augusta that in such cases your maid used to ask you for a holiday, and my father had learned this detail by chance from Augusta. There was but one more difficulty : to remove you.'

"For a minute or so they both kept

silent; then suddenly the woman cried fiercely:

'You sent me that wire!'

'I obeyed my father's orders,' answered the man.

'And for a full year you let me be suspected of being a thief... protesting all the while that you loved me?'

'I do love you... and I regret...'

'Ah! you regret, you scoundrel! And to show your regret you spoiled my life as your father had spoiled my father's work? Scoundrel, scoundrel, scoundrel!'

"I heard the man laugh, a cold, cruel laugh.

'No!' she went on, 'you do not regret, but I will teach you to repent!...'

"The next second I heard a report. George and I broke in the door. She had shot him through the left arm. I am afraid, P. C., that you have never seen her look as beautiful as I have.

"What more can I say? The next day the affair was in the papers. I hoped it would be an advertisement for the 'Grand-duke's hotel.' It would perhaps have been one for a bigger place or one that had been

better known. As it was, it finished my business. Three months later I was ruined. You may believe me, P. C., that my wish to be revenged on that scoundrel is as strong as yours."

"And Mitzi?" I ask.

"Mitzi was arrested. But after three days, as the gentleman had left the country, she was restored to liberty. He had gone away with all their luggage, and she possessed nothing except a few jewels, which she pawned. The proceeds did not suffice to pay her journey home, not to speak of her bill, for she had remained several weeks in Paris, hoping to find an engagement, a hope in which she failed. Finally I had to give her a few francs in order to help her to return to her country."

There, Mr. Reader, is what Charles Young tells me. It leads you exactly to the point—namely, Mitzi's coming home—where I had left you.

Now, this is not all I have to report of yesterday's memorable evening. I am sure you wish to know all about the night expedition of your four friends. You shall have what you want.

There is to the north-east of our trench a little wood. The colonel wanted to know what was in that wood, whether it was fortified and how. Our aeroplanes had been unable to give any information, nor had our listening posts achieved any result. So there was but one way: by scouting.

Well, as soon as night had come we crawled out of our trench, armed to the teeth, and after an hour's crawling we reached the edge of the forest. To say that it was an easy job would be an unnecessary exaggeration, for there were German searchlights unceasingly licking the ground. Yet there was always time when we saw the lights creeping nearer, to lie still for an instant and to pretend that we were corpses.

"Can't you see," said Pringle once quite aloud, as the ray was just resting on his body, "that I'm dead? What's the use of your lights having glasses?"

Charlie began to laugh, so that if the beam by any chance had touched him, he would certainly have been detected.

"Mind you," said I, "the blooming thing is wavering."

"*La donna e mobile*," sang Charlie

softly and added : "It's Hun-steady."

"Shut up, Sergeant, said Pringle, "it's foolish to joke now."

"Hun-reasonable, you mean. Let's go on."

"The ray is still too near," warned Guncotton. "It is premature to move."

"Hun-timely?" corrected Charley. "Perhaps; well, we have plenty of time."

"Oh Sergeant, don't be cruel!"

"Do you really think me Hun-merciful? It seems that my puns are Hun-successful..."

And so it went on for a time, while we lay motionless under the rays of the searchlight. Yet the Sergeant did not cease thinking of anything else than words beginning with an optional Hun.

But when we were inside the wood our real business began. It consisted in reaching a certain spot where in all probability a small detachment of Germans was posted, for it was a naturally sheltered part. Should no Germans be there, then we were to come back and if possible our troops were to occupy it during the same night.

We had been walking silently when the Sergeant suddenly stopped.

"They are here," he whispered.

"What are we to do?" I inquired.

"We have orders in case of no Germans are there," said Guncotton. "But if there are some?"

"I think it's clear," declared the Sergeant. "Either kill them, or take them prisoners."

From a spot at a distance of about a hundred yards there came the buzzing murmur of many voices, conversing probably in a peaceful manner.

"They are too many to kill," said Guncotton.

"But not to take prisoners."

And Charlie at once invented a plan of attack.

Accordingly we began talking gently at first, then louder and louder, until we shouted all four for all we were worth. Finally Charlie in his strongest voice gave some orders, which Pringle repeated different times, sometimes at a higher pitch, sometimes at a lower, and always a little fainter. He is a ventriloquist, you know. While he was doing this, Charlie and I rushed forwards on to the Germans who were in the

greatest disorder, having been taken entirely by surprise.

"Surrender," cried we both.

There were two German officers who advanced. We explained to them that as we were eight hundred they had better give in. All this time Pringle was going on with his orders, given in ever so many voices, which seemed to come from different directions. And suddenly Guncotton produced his will-o-the-wisp trick, which completed the illusion. He was causing lights to appear to the right and the left, so that our Germans (they were forty) seemed entirely surrounded.

The success was complete, and an hour later we were bringing in our bag of officers and men. Only... by some sort of a miracle the men's figures had grown. They were ninety now.

"This time I have got my commission," said Charlie to me as we entered our trenches.

But somehow, in our excitement, instead of returning to our own quarters, we had taken a wrong direction, and we arrived at a part distant from ours by more than two

miles. Still, you may imagine, whether we were well received.

The colonel on duty congratulated us and asked for our names. To my utter surprise Charlie gave his as... Friedrich Wilhelm Young.

As we marched away through the communication trenches, cheery and mirthful, I asked Charlie why he had given this name.

"I did not," he said.

"You did."

"Never."

"You did," asserted Pringle and Cotton.

"You are spinning me a yarn."

"We are not," we declared unanimously, "you gave your name as Friedrich Wilhelm Young."

He remained silent, absolutely cast down. Never have I seen a man so overcome as poor Charlie was that minute. At last he said :

"Well, that's done it. I must have been too excited. Farewell, my commission! We'll drink that bottle of champagne tomorrow."

And we shall. At last!

* * * *

Once more I open these sheets, which I have had to neglect for four full months. And you will be surprised, my dear friends, who have escorted me to Austria and France, to hear that I am no longer writing this in the trenches, but in Belsize Park.

I suppose I must tell you all. Following *Major* Young's advice, I will begin by the beginning. In fact, I have already begun by informing you in one single word that Charlie—he will always remain Charlie for me—has at last met with success. Bad luck evidently ceased to exist from the moment when we emptied that bottle of champagne. On being questioned about his real name he made a clear breast of the whole story of his identity; and thus, what had not brought Sergeant Charles Young a commission, has finally brought Captain Friedrich Wilhelm Young a promotion.

That occurred on the last day of June. On the first of July, 1916, the great attack began. I am not going to describe that big affair. It has provided so much copy to professional writers that a poor amateur

like me has no more chance. But how we rushed out of the trenches! Poor Cotton—on that very morning, an hour before the action began, he had received news from the Royal Society of Chemists that they were to publish his treatise at their expense, and he had said to me with an elated expression:

"Now I can die calmly: I know that I will not die altogether."

Poor Cotton was perhaps the first to be killed.

As for me I find it absolutely impossible to tell you what I did. You know that feeling: When you wake up in the morning you remember sometimes that you have been dreaming, but cannot recall the slightest detail. It even happens that while asleep you intend to remember a certain detail of your dream; yet, in the morning it is clean forgotten.

I cannot say how long I remained in that fight, two, four, six hours, or more perhaps. The only thing I recollect is a feeling of infinite comfort when I woke up, and how it gave way instantly to an unbearable agony in my right foot. I was lying in a bed, and the bed was in a large tent with many others.

Dazed as I was, I realized that I must have been wounded, but I felt too tired to think, or even to keep my eyes open.

A soft hand stroked my brow lightly and a gentle voice said a few words. I opened my eyes again. A nurse was standing there, with two surgeons. They uncovered me and undid the bandage which was hiding my foot. Then one of the men said to me :

"You are a courageous man. You will not be afraid of a little operation ?"

"It can't hurt more than it does now.'

"It won't hurt at all."

"Then go ahead, sir, what is it ?"

"Nothing much. We think, my friend and I, that you have one foot too many."

I reflected one moment. This was rather unpleasant. But what could I do but put a cheerful face on an ugly matter ? So I said :

"Right you are, but don't make a mistake."

"What d'you mean ?" asked the surgeon.

"You might cut off the sound foot, by mistake."

"All right," said he smiling. "That's the spirit we want. We will do it in a couple of hours. Try to sleep in the meantime."

The next time you have an opportunity, Mr. Reader, you make an effort to sleep with such a prospect before you. A cripple; I would be a cripple. What would life be in future? It is not such a very easy thing to stand on two feet, but on one! You must be a virtuoso for that... or an acrobat. Anyhow I would be out of the ghastly business. For I may tell it now, it was hellish, altogether.

But at last, it was over for me. I had done my bit.—Done my bit—Done my bit.—And I repeated twenty, fifty, a hundred times that "Done my bit" like an engine that says the same thing unceasingly. Yes, I would go home, back to Blighty. Done my bit.—Done my bit.—What would dad say? Poor dad! He would feel it more than I. He would tremble when he saw my name in the casualty list. And he would cry and be proud that I had done my bit.—Done my bit.—Done my bit.—And then he would buy an artificial foot for me, the best he could

find. In fact he did, and I am not so much to be pitied as you may think. Really not. And the mater... she would scold me, no doubt. In fact, she did it too :

"My poor Patrick," was her first word, "how can one be such an awkward bungler? What did you do with your foot?"

"I apologize, mother," I answered, "I have mislaid it. I must have left it in France. Do you want me to go back and fetch it?"

Thus, you see, I could not sleep during these two hours, as I had been told to.

Suddenly, as I was lying there, I heard a voice, a very faint voice to my right, calling me :

"Mr. Cooper!"

Slowly I turned my head. I could not turn anything else. And there, by my side, lay pallid, cadaverous, Franz von Heidenbrunn.

"What are you doing here?" I asked.

"I?—I am dying."

A pause.

"But how did you come here? Why are you not on the Austrian front?"

Very slowly the answer came :

"I became a deserter, when I eloped with Mitzi. I never returned to Austria. I served with the Germans."

He was very weak, I could hardly hear his words. And I, too, felt so feeble that I was scarcely able to speak.

After a while he began again:

"You know that old Hammer died?"

"Poor Hammer," I said. "And Doblana?"

"I don't know."

There was another silence. How exhausted he looked! And I had sworn that I would avenge myself on him.

"Giulay is married," he whispered.

Evidently he wanted to speak about my Viennese acquaintances. But what could it matter to me whether Giulay was married? Was it to Fanny? I wondered. The answer to my mute question came soon.

"To Mitzi."

Giulay and Mitzi! So they had both been satisfied with remnants... he with what Franz, and she with what Fanny had left. Such was the end of my Austrian Love.

Again there was a silence. Longer, deeper than before. His breath was diffi-

cult, already rattling in his throat. But after a while he seemed once more to find a little strength.

"Can't you forgive me?" he asked at last.

"I do forgive you, with all my heart."

He became calm, and it seemed to me as if a dim smile was passing over his features.

He died the same night.

Three or four weeks went by. I was doing splendidly, as people say whose feet have not been amputated. I had been removed to another tent where there were only men who had behaved well, like me for instance, and who could be allowed to read, to smoke, to chat. Don't you believe that it was a sorry company. There was not one complete specimen of the species man. But we bore our lot cheerfully.

To say the truth I had not, for years, felt so pleased, so satisfied. The nightmare was over. When I recollected the years between my flight from Vienna until the outbreak of the war, and then the terrible months in Gallipoli and in France, I regarded my present situation as perfect bliss. Perhaps also had I freed myself, by

writing my story, from the ever torturing memory of her, whom I have called my Austrian Love. For the first time Life was smiling gain... Life and Music. I may as well tell you that since I have returned home I have begun writing a symphonic poem. I hope you will come one day and applaud it. I found its themes while I was in that cheerful hospital. I found something else, too.

You know, of course, that in the hospitals kind people are always providing poor devils like me with all sorts of entertainments. If there was a proof necessary to show that music is not only an expensive noise, (what of a bombardment, then ?) you have only to make inquiries about the number of concerts given to the wounded. Singers, pianists, violinists, unknown and famous, come to brighten our time of convalescence.

Such a party, one day, visited our hospital. The names were not celebrated ones, but we did not mind. The renowned artists were not always those we liked best.

There was first a man who played the violin. I remember it was Godard's *Berceuse de Jocelyn*. Then a baritone, who

sang popular ballads. He had a beautiful voice and I should have liked to see his face. But I was still in bed and not allowed to move; and from where I was I could only hear, but not see the performers.

And then the piano attacked sounds familiar to me. And a feminine voice began:

"My heart's in the Highlands, my heart is not here..."

Good God! What was that?

Mitzi?

Had her voice changed so much? Had she used her Italianized name to sneak into this country? She alone knew that song .. And yet...

I tried to sit up, in spite of the doctor's orders. But a nurse, who, as I discovered later on, had special instructions, noticed me and came nearer.

"You are not to move, you know," she said smiling.

"Oh let me!" I begged.

"No, no, no!"

The song was over and the men applauded.

All of them, except one, Patrick Cooper.

And the voice began again :

"Breathes there the man, with soul so dead,
Who never to himself hath said,
This is my own, my native land!..."

That could not be Mitzi!... she had always been unable to sing that song.

"Whose heart hath ne'er within him burn'd,
As home his footsteps he hath turn'd,
From wandering on a foreign strand!..."

The voice seemed to come nearer.—Yes! the singer had left the platform...

"If such there breathe, go, mark him well..."

Now she appeared.

"Bean!" I cried.

* * * *

And we are to be married to-morrow.

THE END.

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